SYLLABUS PLSC 551
INSTITUTIONS IN COMPARATIVE POLITICAL ECONOMY
SPRING, 2011
Thursday, 9:05-12:05, 236 Pond

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Office Hours: Tuesday, Thursdays 1-2:30 and by appointment.

Course Description:
This class aims to provide an introduction to and an overview of the role of domestic political institutions in current research in comparative and international political economy. Political economy in its entirety explores how domestic and international political configurations (institutions, structures, etc.) and events (elections, coups, oil shocks, currency crisis, etc.) systematically produce certain specific economic policies, and influence their effects. In this class we will focus only on the first of these two broad categories of work – the role of domestic political institutions in initiating, enacting and implementing economic outcomes. The class assumes students have taken the comparative seminar.

The class is divided into three segments, (i) theories of institutional origins (ii) institutional influence on key actors and delegated institutions and, (iii) specific economic outcomes. For section (ii) we will consider the theoretical and empirical body of work which studies how institutions affect political party systems, special interest groups, the bureaucracy and the judiciary. We will then look at some of the most prominent models of policymaking and how they incorporate institutional factors before finally moving on to study specific policy issues. For section (iii), I have provided a list of 6 topics from which we as a class will choose 3 topics to focus on. Please look at these and jot down your preferences before we meet in class for the first time. We will cover both democracies and autocracies among developing and developed countries.

As a class in comparative politics, one of the aims of the discussion in the class will be to test abstract theories of political economy using in-depth knowledge of specific cases, and to further our understanding of cases by applying lessons from theoretical and statistical work. As such, I highly encourage you to choose a couple of countries, preferably one you are familiar with and one you have very little familiarity with, as countries you can study through these frameworks as the class progresses. Comparative varies very widely methodologically and one of our tasks is to assess the appropriateness of the various methods employed in this research. Here again, familiarity with a couple of cases will help you perform these assessments.

Format:
We meet on Thursday mornings for some mixture of lecture and discussion of the week’s required readings. The readings listed under further readings provide additional resources for exploring the topic in-depth and frequently lists classic readings and more alternative viewpoints.
Needless to say, *everyone* is responsible for being **prepared** to discuss *all* of the required material every week. Discussion will focus on the required readings however you are welcome to draw on additional materials and information. I may occasionally change the readings for some week to suit the needs of the class. Readings are available online directly through journal websites and jstor. I will place copies of book chapters outside my office. Please make a copy for yourself and return it to the folder so others may do so. I will try to make these available online via angel as well.

As part of the written requirements of the class, you will be required to submit 3 4-5 page memos on the topics of 3 weeks of your choosing. I will also require that each student emails 3 questions based on each week’s material to me and the entire class by Wednesday evening i.e. the evening **before** class by 8 pm. The memos will also be due at the same time. The weeks for which you choose to write response memos, you will also be one of the assigned discussants for that class. As such you will be part of the team responsible for presenting a 30 minute summary and critique of that week’s readings. I encourage all assigned discussants to meet as a group to discuss the readings and decide on their presentation strategy. This is not meant to be a formal presentation but rather should be approached as presenting and leading a discussion based on a thorough analysis of that week’s readings.

Your discussion should address the main questions posed for that week in the syllabus and raise any further questions, concerns, issues, you consider pertinent. Some important points to consider when doing the readings are listed below at the end of this section. I will typically follow the presentation by providing additional background on the topic of the week and discuss any pertinent economic and technical material required to understand and critique the readings for about 15 minutes. We will take a short break of 15 minutes at this time. After this, I will initiate and mediate class discussion based on the questions submitted by you and by the discussants for that week. I may intervene and stop a discussion if I feel that it is going off topic or if it has taken too much time.

**Discussion Framework: Some points to consider when reading the materials for class.**

*Theory:*

- What questions motivate the paper? What is the specific theoretical idea being presented in the paper and how does it relate to the larger literature and important theoretical frameworks on that topic?
- What are the theoretical assumptions being made by the researcher and how are they being justified? Which assumptions are heroic and which ones are common for research in that literature?
- What is the unit of analysis? What are the observable implications of the theory? How do they relate to prior claims in the literature? What is the theoretical contribution of the paper?
Empirics:

- What is the central empirical strategy of the author? What is the nature of the data being used to test the hypotheses? Are the theoretical concepts validly measured by the data? How are alternative theories being tested by the author?
- Does the author’s research design adequately test his theoretical claims? How can the research design be improved? Can the measures be improved? Are there any additional techniques which may be applied to improve or elaborate further on the analysis? Can the case selection be improved? Are there countries or time periods which challenge the claims of the paper? How should an analysis of these cases be incorporated into the larger analysis? What extensions, elaborations, etc. can be undertaken based on this paper’s analysis?

Written Assignments:

- **3 page empirical trend summary.** For week 1, I would like you to examine the available empirical datasets and explore various distributions and trends in the institutions and economic outcomes of countries. The data sources and variables I would like you to examine are listed in the readings section of the syllabus under week 1. Consider the geographic distribution and, temporal trends and clusters. Based on this examination I would like you to write a 4-5 page report which summarizes the important trends you find and raises any issues of definition and measurement. You can use tables, graphs, maps, etc any method for summarizing your information that you feel conveys the key trends. This exercise is meant to fix in your mind some of the important patterns that form the empirical context for this class and to generate a handy reference for you. This memo will be due **Friday, January 28.**

- **3 response memos, length 4-5 pages each.** List the 3 weeks in which you would prefer to write memos and lead discussions in the order of your preference and please email me your preferences by **Monday, January 17.** Each memo should aim to address the topic of the week in a manner that synthesizes all the readings rather than simply summarizing individual readings. Consider using the discussion points raised above as guidelines in doing the readings and in writing the memo. The memo will be due **Wednesday evening before class by 8 pm via email or hard copy.**

- **Research Paper (20-22 pgs).** Your research paper should present an original piece of research. Start thinking about topics that interest you early in the class. **By February 24,** you will need to submit a 2 page annotated research proposal for your paper. I will meet with each of you individually and give you feedback on this proposal before you embark on the analysis and writing of the paper itself. You should aim to write a research paper which you can develop and polish for submission. **Due May 1.**

Grading:

- Empirical summary and 3 memos = 20% @ 5%
- Leading discussions and general participation = 30%
• Research Paper = 50%

Academic Dishonesty:
The Department of Political Science, along with the College of the Liberal Arts and the University, takes violations of academic dishonesty seriously. Observing basic honesty in one’s work, words, ideas, and actions is a principle to which all members of the community are required to subscribe. All course work by students is to be done on an individual basis unless an instructor clearly states that an alternative is acceptable. Any reference materials used in the preparation of any assignment must be explicitly cited. Students uncertain about proper citation are responsible for checking with their instructor. In an examination setting, unless the instructor gives explicit prior instructions to the contrary, whether the examination is in-class or take-home, violations of academic integrity shall consist but are not limited to any attempt to receive assistance from written or printed aids, or from any person or papers or electronic devices, or of any attempt to give assistance, whether the one so doing has completed his or her own work or not. Lying to the instructor or purposely misleading any Penn State administrator shall also constitute a violation of academic integrity. In cases of any violation of academic integrity it is the policy of the Department of Political Science to follow procedures established by the College of the Liberal Arts. More information on academic integrity and procedures followed for violation can be found at: http://tinyurl.com/n3q8ym

Disabilities:
The Pennsylvania State University encourages qualified people with disabilities to participate in its programs and activities and is committed to the policy that all people shall have equal access to programs, facilities, and admissions without regard to personal characteristics not related to ability, performance, or qualifications as determined by University policy or by state or federal authorities. If you anticipate needing any type of accommodation in this course or have questions about physical access, please tell the instructor as soon as possible. Reasonable accommodations will be made for all students with disabilities however it is the student’s responsibility to inform the instructor of any required accommodations early in the semester. Please do not wait until just before an exam to decide you want to inform the instructor of a learning disability; any accommodations for disabilities must be arranged well in advance. Email me in advance and we can discuss how to make up lost time. For official university policy, see: http://tinyurl.com/mcth6t and http://tinyurl.com/mzyqgw

List of CPE relevant books that are good to have on the shelf:


Good sources of general references on CPE and institutions relevant topics:

1. Oxford Handbooks on Political Economy, Institutions and Comparative Politics – good updated literature reviews on a variety of topics.
2. Annual Reviews of Political Science – depth and quality vary across articles
3. Thomas Oatley IPE textbook – good starting point for IPE references
4. Clark and Golders Undergrad Comparative Politics textbook – good starting point for comparative topics
5. Journal of Economic Literature
6. Journal of Political Economy

Accessible intermediate level economics theory references:

WEEK 1 – January 13

TOPIC: EMPIRICAL MAP OF THE INSTITUTIONAL WORLD

Questions:

- What are the consensual definitions of the institutions listed in the table below?
- What are the global geographic distributions of these institutional choices?
- What are the temporal trends in the adoption and diffusion of these institutions?
- What measures of these institutions are available to researchers? From what sources?
- How are these institutional choices distributed across income levels?
- What are the global and regional trends and distributions for basic economic outcomes such as per capita and gross income, Human Development Index, measures of inequality, health, literacy, inflation, debt, trade openness, FDI and financial flows?
- What are some methodological issues in the definitions and measurements of these variables?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regime type (varieties of democracies &amp; autocracies)</th>
<th>Legislative institutions</th>
<th>Judicial</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Electoral institutions</td>
<td>Federal/Unitary</td>
<td>Political Parties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive regime type</td>
<td>Bicameral/Unicameral</td>
<td>International Institutions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Your memo should characterize global, regional and time trends for these institutions and economic variables and note any patterns you find interesting, puzzling or inconsistent across sources. You are welcome to use additional data sources. Creative use of tables, graphs, maps, etc over textual descriptions is highly encouraged! Other than making you familiar with these empirical patterns, I also want these materials to be available to you as a handy resource you can consult in your own work. Your memo should therefore be written and formatted in a manner that produces the most useful reference for your use.

Some sources to consult for definitions, distributions and data:

- Polity IV
- DPI – Keefer et al.
- Freedom House
- IDEAS Electoral Database
- APSA CP Page for Links to various datasets on comparative
- Fish and Koenig 2008 for legislative institutions
- Penn World tables for economic trends
- Also check the websites of the World Bank, IMF, UNDP, etc for various economic data

**WEEK 2 – January 20**

**TOPIC: Origins I - Where do institutions come from?**

**Questions:**

- What are the different schools of thought on institutional origins?
- When and why did certain schools become prominent or fall in prestige?
- What kind of data and techniques seem relevant for testing these theories and their rise or decline?
- Institutions versus other factors i.e. institutions in the context of interests and ideas.

**Required Readings:**


Further Readings:

3. Weingast and - Institutional equilibria or equilibrium institutions?
5. Zachary Elkins – Project on Constitutional Change. See online website.

WEEK 3 – January 27

TOPIC: Origins II - Where do institutions come from?

Questions:

- What are the various domestic sources of influence on institutional choice?
- What are the various international sources of influence on institutional choice?
- To what extent are domestic and international sources relevant in understanding institutional origins? What determines this?

Required Readings:

1. Englebert, Pierre. “Pre-colonial institutions, post-colonial states, and economic development in tropical Africa” Political Research Quarterly; Mar 2000; 53, 1; Research Library


Further Readings:


***JANUARY 28 – EMPIRICAL MEMO IS DUE***

WEEK 4- February 3

TOpic: Institutions and Political Parties

Questions:

- How do institutions influence the internal organization and practices of parties?
- How do institutions influence party strength and party discipline?
- How do institutions influence policymaking and policy outcomes via parties?

Required Readings:


Further Readings:


WEEK 5 – February 10

TOPIC: Institutions and Coalitions

Questions:

- How do institutions affect the stability and composition of coalitions?
- What is the policymaking impact of coalition politics?

Required Readings:


Further Readings:


Week 6 – February 17

TOPIC: Autocratic Institutions

Questions:

- What political and policymaking problems are authoritarian institutions aimed at solving?
- What has been their performance in solving these problems?
- What have their consequences been?


Further Readings:


WEEK 7 – February 24

TOPIC: Institutions and Special Interest Groups

*** 2-PG ANNOTATED RESEARCH PROPOSAL IS DUE***
Questions:

- How do institutions influence the number, representativeness and organization of special interest groups?
- How do institutions influence the lobbying tactics of special interest groups?
- How do institutions influence the effectiveness and success of sigs?
- Do institutions affect the welfare consequences of sig lobbying behaviours?

Required Readings:


Further Readings:


12. Various articles in the *Journal of Public Administration*, Special Issue, 8: 15–32. Articles covering Eastern and Central Europe, Latin America, China, India

**WEEK 8 – March 3**

**TOPIC: Institutions and the Bureaucracy**

**Questions:**

- How do institutions influence the structure of delegated relationships?
- How do institutions influence the nature of delegated relationships?
- How do institutions influence the political and policy consequences of bureaucratic behaviors?

**Required Readings:**


**Further Readings:**


***WEEK OF March 17 – No class (will be out of town for a presentation)***

WEEK 9 – March 24

TOPIC: Institutions and the Judiciary

Questions:

- How do institutions affect the adoption of various judicial and legal rules?
- How do they affect the practice of judicial independence?
- How do they affect the rule of law realized in practice in a country?

Required Readings:


Further Readings:


Week 10 – March 31

TOPIC: Institutions and the Policymaking Process

Questions:

- What are the important policymaking models in Political Science?
- What is the role of institutions in these policymaking models?
**Required Readings:**


**Further Readings:**


http://www.mitpressjournals.org/doi/pdf/10.1162/00335530232093506

TOPICS IN CPE:

WEEK 11 – April 7

TOPIC: Institutions, Development and Growth


2. Acemoglu & Robinson Ch. 2, pp. 15-44, Chs. 8-10, pp. 221-304.


Further Readings:


   http://econ.lse.ac.uk/staff/tbesley/papers/justrewards.pdf
   http://www.columbia.edu/~mh2245/papers1/HHPW.pdf
   http://www.economics.harvard.edu/faculty/williamson/files/w12610.pdf
   http://www.nber.org/papers/t0333

WEEKS – April 14, April 21, April 28

WE WILL CHOOSE 3 OF THE FOLLOWING 6 TOPICS

TOPIC: Institutions, Inequality and Redistribution

Required Readings:


**Further readings**


**TOPIC: Transition & Reform**

**Required Readings:**


**Further Readings:**


**TOPIC: Institutions and International Trade**

**Required Readings:**


Further Readings


**TOPIC: Institutions and Financial Markets**

**Required Readings:**


Further Readings


TOPIC: Institutions and Agrarian Development

Required Readings:


Econo


Further Readings: To be announced.

TOPIC: Institutions and Corruption

Required Readings:


Further Readings:


***RESEARCH PAPER DUE MAY 1***