IPS233:

Comparative and International Political Economy

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Office Hours: TH 3:15-5:00 or by appointment

Objectives
This course examines the interaction of politics and economics in developed / developing democracies and introduces students to the field of comparative and international political economy. Topics include: the origins and purposes of state intervention in the market; the relationship between economic growth and democratization; varieties of capitalism; class conflict and compromise; the evolution of the welfare state; the policy link between voters and partisan governments; and challenges posed by globalization.

In covering a broad range of material, you will engage some fundamental questions about the political economy: Why does the government tax you? Is redistributing wealth from the rich to the poor better or worse for each party? What is the difference between capitalism and socialism (and what, exactly, is “democratic socialism”)? Would more Americans be better off with stronger unions? Has globalization led to a convergence in policies across countries?

Course Design
Each class will combine lectures with seminar-style discussions. I will spend the first 30-40 minutes of each session detailing the issues surrounding that week’s topic and introducing some case studies of various countries. The remaining time will be devoted to a discussion of the topic at large, where we will role-play / simulate the behavior of actors facing different strategic environments. This sounds a lot geekier than it will be, but I promise it will be both fun and insightful. The purpose of these simulations is to blend ideas and evidence from the readings to give you a feel for the underlying efficiency concerns and distributive conflicts that drive the political economy writ large.

Requirements
It goes without saying that I expect you to have read the assigned material by the first session of that week, and your participation in class discussions will account for 25% of the grade. In addition, there will be take-home midterm that comprises 25% of the final grade.

The rest of your evaluation will be based on an independent research paper, where you will apply the theories discussed in this course to analyze the political economy of a country or region of your choice. One option is to examine the specific topics discussed in the readings, such as the politics of the poor vs. the rich or the electoral incentives of politicians. Another is to expand
the analysis to “new” topics, such as the effects of globalization on the environment or the impact of trade on poverty in developing countries.

You should submit a research prospectus – topic and country/region – in Week 7, and I will recommend further reading for your paper. The final paper (15-20 pages) will be due during reading period.

**Required Books**

There are three assigned textbooks for this class, and these can be purchased at the Stanford Bookstore (or online, if you prefer). Most of the readings are journal articles, which can be downloaded from the Stanford Courseworks website once you sign up for the class: [http://coursework.stanford.edu/](http://coursework.stanford.edu/). You can also find them online through the library’s “E-Journals” link: [http://library.stanford.edu/catdb/e_resources/index.html](http://library.stanford.edu/catdb/e_resources/index.html).


Section I: Economic Structures and Regime Type

1) State Intervention in the Economy


2) The Organization of Capitalism (2 weeks)


Section II: Policy Linkages between the Government and Society

3) Class Conflict? The Political Representation of the Rich vs. the Poor


4) Welfare State Evolution: Redistribution and De-commodification


5) The Electoral Connection I: What Voters Want


6) The Electoral Connection II: What Politicians Give


Section III: Changes in the Global Environment

7) State Power and Globalization


8) Coping with Globalization


9) The Decline of the Welfare State?


