Comparative Political Economy
Fall 2009

Erik Wibbels
Office Hours: Tuesday 2-4
Email: e.wibbels@duke.edu
Web: http://www.duke.edu/~ew41/Home.html

Course Description: This class provides an overview of current developments in comparative political economy. Readings cover the developed and developing regions of the world, material written by political scientists, economists, and historians, and a broad swath of topics with robust, contemporary research programs. The course is designed less to provide a broad overview of thinking on the relationship between government and economics than to explore the areas of comparative political economy that have seen interesting developments in the last twenty or so years. The chief goal is to help you develop your own research project. As such, the main assignment is a final paper.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Participation: (25 percent). Class sessions will be conducted in a highly participatory seminar format. As the class will depend heavily on the on the quality of class participation, it is essential that members of the seminar attend all sessions, participate actively in class discussions, and complete the required readings prior to class. To ensure we’re all keeping up, please send a half page or so of discussion points/questions bearing on the week’s reading to me by noon the day of class. I will put the comments together and send them to the group. You can raise questions about theory, method, point out conflicts between readings, develop links with previous weeks’ readings, whatever. These needn’t be long and detailed, but they also shouldn’t be a one-line question/comment.

Short Papers and Discussion Leadership (25 percent): Students will also choose two weeks for which to write a short (3 page) paper in reaction to the readings. This paper will form the basis for a more active role for the student in leading the week’s discussion. For example, the paper and resulting discussion might critique some aspect of the readings, discuss extensions, critical case studies, or potential empirical applications, entertain alternative assumptions or approaches, or explore related questions that are left unaddressed by the readings. These papers will be circulated to the other students by Tuesday night.

Research Paper: (50 percent total). You will write an original research paper of 20-25 pages that bears on the themes of the class. I would encourage you to talk with me soon about topics, methods, etc. in advance of starting. You will present your papers in the last regular class on November 18, but the paper will be due on Monday, December 7. I encourage you to use the intervening weeks to improve your paper in line with the comments you receive from your presentation. Late papers will be penalized by a letter grade per day.

Note on Readings:
In most cases, the order of the readings actually matters, so I’d encourage you to go in the order on which they appear on the syllabus. The “Recommended” lists are exceedingly extensive. Consider them as little more than helpful in your own research and a guide to the field.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Aug. 26: What is comparative political economy?
• Przeworski, Adam. 2006. “Is the Science of Comparative Politics Possible?” Available here:
  http://politics.as.nyu.edu/object/AdamPrzeworski.html
• Ostrom, E. 2004 “A Letter from the Chair” The Political Economist
  http://www.apsanet.org/%7Epolecon/Fall2003.pdf

Recommended:
• Peter Hall. “The Role of Interests, Institutions, and Ideas in the Comparative Political Economy of the Industrialized Nations.”
• Alt, James and Kenneth Shepsle, eds., Perspectives on Positive Political Economy, Cambridge UP 1990, Intro (Alt & Shepsle), Ch. 2 (Bates), Ch. 9 (Olson).
• Hall, Peter, ed. The Political Power of Economic Ideas: Keynesianism Across Nations.
Introduction.

Sept. 2: Professor Wibbels out of town—no class

Sept. 9: Development I: Development, the Institutions Debate and Some Growth Theory
• David Weil. 2005. “A Framework for Analysis.” Chapters 2 and 3 in Economic Growth.1
• William Easterly. 2001. “Solow’s Surprise: Investment is Not the Key to Growth.” Chapter 3 in The Elusive Quest for Growth. Cambridge: MIT Press.

Presentation: Where are the politics?

---

1 The more technically oriented instead can read Chapter 1 of Barro and Sala-i-Martin’s textbook, Economic Growth.


Recommended:


September 16: Development II: Non-Institutional Accounts


Recommended:

- Gabriella R. Montinola. 2007. “When does Aid Conditionality Work?”
- Tilly, Charles. *Coercion, Capital, and European States*.


**Sept. 23: Education, Human Capital and Development**

**Recommended:**

Part II: Regime Type and the (Dis)Organization of the State

Sept. 30: The PE of Regime Type


Recommended:

- Robert Dahl, *Polyarchy*. Chapters 3-6
- Joseph A. Schumpeter. *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy*.

Oct. 7: The Horizontal Organization of the State

• Pablo Beramendi. “Inequality, Economic Specialization, and Fiscal Decentralization.” *IO.*


**Recommended:**


• Edward Glaeser and Bryce Ward. “Myths and Realities of American Political Geography.” *Journal of Economic Perspectives.* Paper available here: [http://ksgnotes1.harvard.edu/research/wpaper.nsf/d745629e080d1fe88525698900714934/a8ebf684f8f2f6852571160051968c/$FILE/rwp_06_007_glaeser_SSRN.pdf](http://ksgnotes1.harvard.edu/research/wpaper.nsf/d745629e080d1fe88525698900714934/a8ebf684f8f2f6852571160051968c/$FILE/rwp_06_007_glaeser_SSRN.pdf)


Oct. 14: The Choice of Electoral Systems


Oct. 21: Political Disorder and State Breakdown


Recommended:


**Part III: The PE of Redistribution**

**Oct. 28: Redistribution I: Inequality, Redistribution and Insurance**

• Korpi and Palme. 2003. *APSR*

Recommended:

• Ronald Rogowski and Duncan MacRae. “Inequality and Institutions: What Theory, History, and (Some) Data Tell Us.” Forthcoming in Beramendi and Anderson, eds.


Nov. 4: Political Identity, Beliefs and Preferences for Redistribution


Recommended:

NOTE: LAST WEEK CAN BE ON SPECIAL INTEREST POLITICS, PARTIES AND PORK OR TRADE, GLOBALIZATION, ETC. SUCH WEEKS WOULD INVOLVE SOMETHING LIKE THIS:

Special Interests, Parties and Pork:

• Treisman, Daniel. 2007. “What Have we Learned About the Causes of Corruption from Ten Years of Cross-National Empirical Research?” *Annual Review of Political Science*.
• Esping-Andersen, Gösta. "Politics without Class: Postindustrial Cleavages in Europe and America," in Kitschelt et al., *Continuity and Change in Contemporary Capitalism*, ch. 10.

**Globalization and Domestic Politics**

• Kevin O’Rourke and Alan M. Taylor. Democracy and Protectionism. [Link to paper](http://www.nber.org/papers/w12250)

Finance:


Nov. 18: Discussion of Papers and Course Conclusion
Nov. 25 NO CLASS: THANKSGIVING BREAK
OLD STUFF


Presentation: How does globalization impact elections?


Political Business Cycles


Economic Impacts on Elections


Other:
First of all, the class was great and I learned a lot. I especially liked the idea of having someone include additional literature. I am not sure though whether the presentation always integrated well with the rest of the discussion (time constraints etc.). Maybe a short written summary/discussion would have been better. I also think it was a good idea to have papers written so early, but maybe having the presentation one week before the due date would be even better so that we could actually use some of the criticism to improve the paper (or also have a short session in the middle of the semester where each of us has to present the research idea / design).

I also liked the way you always tried to give the big picture, link the various strands of thought in the literature and give suggestions for research ideas. Sometimes I would have liked a stronger focus on the empirical part of various papers. We concentrated a lot on the theoretical arguments, but spent less time on discussing research design or specific empirical strategies. I think that would have been helpful for the papers too. On the other hand, it is very hard to combine a thorough discussion of ideas with a detailed discussion of the empirical implementation.

I also liked the collection of topics and while you obviously have to cover traditional research areas like regime change, redistribution etc., I had the most fun in the sessions on political geography, violence, human capital and also the look at growth. If you wanted to give the class an even more odd spin I would focus on these topics and maybe also touch on the political economy of health care/ disease, gender relations or government revenue.