Comparative Political Economy

V53.0595.001

Mondays 3:30pm-6:00pm

Professor David Stasavage
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Overview: Comparative political economy is the study of how political context influences economic policy choice and economic performance. This seminar will focus on the link between democratic politics and economic policy, asking first how representative democracy influences overall economic performance. Subsequently, we will examine the link between democratic politics and specific policies including macroeconomic policy, redistribution, and basic service provision in developing countries. The course will focus on theories that use the methodology of rational choice, but extensive prior knowledge of this methodology will not be assumed. In addition, a number of the empirical readings for the course use basic statistical tests, but prior knowledge will not be assumed.

Course requirements: As this is a seminar, it is crucial that students do the readings before class and that they be prepared to discuss them in detail. In addition students are expected to present the readings. Although the number of presentations will vary with enrollment, I expect that each student will present two or three times during the semester. In addition to the in-class presentations, students will write two short papers during the course of the semester (due dates March 10th and April 14th), as well as a longer research paper that will be due in my office on Wednesday May 10th. The topic for this research paper should be agreed upon with me in advance.

The final paper will represent 40% of the final grade, class presentations and participation will count for another 30%, and the two shorter essays will count for the final 30%.

Readings: Students should purchase the following four texts which have been ordered at the bookstore.


**Where to find the readings:**

(B) – Section from book ordered for purchase.

(E) – Material available electronically.

(P) – In readings packet available for purchase.

**January 23 - Introduction: Core Features of Representative Democracy and their Impact on Economic Policy**


Manin, Bernard, Adam Przeworski, and Sustan Stokes (1999) “Introduction” and “Elections and Representation” in Przeworski, Stokes and Manin , pp.1-54 (B)


**January 30 - Representative Institutions and Government Commitment**


**February 6 - Political Institutions, Economic Institutions, and Long-Run Growth**

North Douglass and and Robert Paul Thomas (1973) *The Rise of the Western World: A New Economic History*, CUP, pp.1-158. (B)


February 13 - Democracy and Growth

Przeworski, Adam “Democracy and Economic Development” (E)


February 27 - Partisanship and the Macroeconomy


Clark, William Roberts (2003) Capitalism, Not Globalism, pp.1-104 (B)

March 6 – Discretion, Accountability and Macroeconomic Outcomes


Clark, William Roberts (2003) Capitalism, Not Globalism, pp.105-176 (B)

March 20 – The Politics of Inequality, Social Insurance, and Redistribution


March 27 - Why Doesn’t the US Have a European Style Welfare State?


April 3 - What Determines the Size of Government?


April 10 – Democratic Politics and Government Responsiveness


April 17 - Democratic Politics and Basic Service Provision in Developing Countries


April 24 - Information and Governance; When is More Better?


May 1 – Concluding session