

POL S 270: INTRODUCTION TO POLITICAL ECONOMY

Summer 2021

5 Credits

Instructor:	Travis Nelson	Time:	Online
Email:	travisn@uw.edu	Location:	Online
Office Hours:	TTh 12-1 or by appointment	Office:	GWN 36

Course Page

1. <https://canvas.uw.edu/courses/1459085>

Course Description

This course is designed to introduce students to the principles of political economy. We will start by learning about some of the early thinkers in moral philosophy and political economy, such as Adam Smith, David Ricardo, and Karl Marx, before moving into some more recent thinkers including John Maynard Keynes and Milton Friedman. From there we will discuss two different approaches that play a large role in modern economics: rational choice theory and behavioralism. The rest of the class will focus on topics in political economy.

Students are expected to keep up with current events in national and international politics through the daily reading of a national newspaper. A portion of class is dedicated to the discussion of current events.

Course-level Learning Objectives (CLOs):

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate an understanding of the historical roots of political economy.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the concepts and theories used to analyze global politics and political economy.
- Demonstrate an understanding of contemporary issues in political economy.
- Critically apply relevant theories to interpret contemporary case studies.
- Cultivate an awareness of the linkage between international issues and local issues.

Grading Policy: Online Discussion Boards (20%), 2 Exams (50%), Research Paper (30%)

Grading

This course will have online discussion boards, 2 exams, and a research paper. The exam will be one hour in length and will consist of short answer and essay questions. Each student will choose a contemporary economic policy domain and prepare a research paper. Some of these topics include the consequences of restrictions on digital currency usage, policies surrounding automation in the labor force, regulation of the share economy, and the like. All memos must be typed in size 12 font, double spaced, 10 pages (not including references), and submitted on Canvas by August 13 11:59pm. This class is “W Optional.” If you choose **W credit**, you must submit the paper to me by email no later than August 3rd, I will then provide feedback for you to incorporate before submitting the final draft.

Important Dates:

Exam 1	July 23-25
Exam 2	August 20-22
Research Paper	August 13

Letter Grade Distribution:

$\geq 97.00\%$	4.0	74.00%	2.4
95.00%	3.9	73.00%	2.3
93.00%	3.8	72.00%	2.2
91.00%	3.7	71.00%	2.1
89.00%	3.6	70.00%	2.0
87.00%	3.5	68.00%	1.9
85.00%	3.4	66.00%	1.8
83.00%	3.3	64.00%	1.7
82.00%	3.2	62.00%	1.6
81.00%	3.1	60.00%	1.5
80.00%	3.0	58.00%	1.4
79.00%	2.9	56.00%	1.3
78.00%	2.8	54.00%	1.2
77.00%	2.7	52.00%	1.1
76.00%	2.6	50.00%	1.0
75.00%	2.5	$\leq 48.00\%$	0

Grading Policy

I am responsible for the grading of your submitted work. I make every attempt to be fair, transparent, and consistent. I will explain any reasoning behind your grade or the meaning of any comments I write on your work on request. Study and review of the material increases the likelihood of receiving a good grade in this course. To request a re-grading of your work (outside of tabulation errors), you must:

1. Wait 24 hours, carefully review your answers, and my comments on them.
2. Provide a typed statement to me (no more than one page) explaining why you believe the grade you received should be altered. This must be about the substance of your work, not the effort you put into it or this class.
3. Email me your written concerns within one week of receiving your exam for discussion.
4. I will reread your work, re-evaluate it if I feel it is appropriate, and return it to you within one week.

Accommodations

If you are a student athlete or a student with disabilities who will need accommodations throughout the quarter, you must provide me with the relevant paperwork within a reasonable time frame (i.e. not the week before an exam).

If a valid medical incident requires you to miss an assignment, I require documentation before it is excused and accommodations made. This is not guaranteed. The sooner you make your request, the more likely accommodations will be made.

If you have already established accommodations with Disability Resources for Students (DRS), please communicate your approved accommodations to the instructor as soon as possible so we can discuss your needs in this course. If you have not yet established services through DRS, but have a temporary health condition or permanent disability that requires accommodations (conditions include but not limited to; mental health, attention-related, learning, vision, hearing, physical or health impacts), you are welcome to contact DRS at 206-543-8924, email uwdrs@uw.edu, or online at <http://disability.uw.edu>. DRS offers resources and coordinates reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities and/or temporary health conditions. Reasonable accommodations are established through an interactive process between you, your instructor, and DRS. It is the policy and practice of the University of Washington to create inclusive and accessible learning environments consistent with federal and state law.

Religious Accommodations: “Washington state law requires that UW develop a policy for accommodation of student absences or significant hardship due to reasons of faith or conscience, or for organized religious activities. The UW’s policy, including more information about how to request an accommodation, is available at Religious Accommodations Policy (<https://registrar.washington.edu/staffandfaculty/religious-accommodations-policy/>). Accommodations must be requested within the first two weeks of this course using the Religious Accommodations Request form (<https://registrar.washington.edu/students/religious-accommodations-request/>).”

Academic Honesty

Cheating and/or plagiarism will not be tolerated under any circumstances. A suspected instance of either may be immediately investigated and necessary disciplinary actions may ensue. Students are expected to uphold the standards of Academic Honesty and Conduct set forth in the Student Rights, Freedoms, and Responsibilities Handbook. Academic dishonesty, including but not limited to cheating, misrepresentation, or plagiarism, is not tolerated at any level.

More information on Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty may be found in the College Catalog. Learning about what plagiarism is and how best to avoid it is also strongly recommended.

Readings

There is one book assigned for the class, “[The Worldly Philosophers](#)” by Robert Heilbroner. The rest of the readings will be provided as PDFs.

QQTP Discussion

This quarter we will be using a discussions assignment form called a QQTP (Questions, Quotations, and Talking Points). Unless otherwise specified, the QQTPs will be due by Midnight on Sunday evenings. There are three types of posts - Questions, Quotes, and Talking Points - that you will be responsible for, the type will be noted in the discussion prompt. Each post does a separate task designed to get you into the core of the assigned readings and is intended to help you prep for class discussions. You can learn more about the process on this page from the [UW Center for Teaching and Learning](#). Details are available in the Canvas classroom.

Tentative Course Outline:

Week	Content
Week 1	<p>Foundations of Political Economy</p> <p>Readings/Lecture:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heilbroner Chapters 1 & 2 “Introduction” & “The Economic Revolution” • Recommended: Caporaso and Levine Introduction and Chapter 1 “Introduction” & “Politics and Economics”
Week 2	<p>The Classics</p> <p>Readings/Lecture:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heilbroner Chapters 3 & 4 “The Wonderful World of Adam Smith” & “The Gloomy Presentiments of Parson Malthus and David Ricardo” • Caporaso and Levine Chapter 2 “The Classical Approach”
Week 3	<p>Marxism</p> <p>Readings/Lecture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heilbroner Chapters 5 & 6, “The Dreams of the Utopian Socialists” & “The Inexorable System of Karl Marx” • Caporaso and Levine Chapter 3 “Marxian Political Economy”
Week 4	<p>Keynes and Friedman</p> <p>Readings/Lecture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heilbroner Chapter 9 “The Heresies of John Maynard Keynes” • Paul Krugman. Who Was Milton Friedman? New York Review of Books, pages 1–13, February 2007
Week 5	<p>Behavioral versus Rational Approaches</p> <p>Readings/Lecture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caporaso and Levine Chapter 6 “Economic Approaches to Political Economy” • Only Read pp. 1471-1481 Jolls, Sunstein, and Thaler. “A Behavioral Approach to Law and Economics” Stanford Law Review, Vol. 50, No. 5 (May, 1998) • Kahneman, Knetsch, and Thaler. “The Endowment Effect, Loss Aversion, and Status Quo Bias” Journal of Economic Perspectives, Volume 5, Number 1, Winter 1991, Pages 193–206 <p>EXAM 1</p>

Week	Content
Week 6	<p>Political Economy of Trade</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gustavo A. Flores-Macas and Sarah E. Kreps. "The Foreign Policy Consequences of Trade: China's commercial relations with Africa and Latin America, 1992-2006." <i>The Journal of Politics</i> 75.2 (2013): 357-371. • Chatzky, McBride, and Sergie, "NAFTA and the USMCA: Weighing the Impact of North American Trade"
Week 7	<p>Globalization and Development</p> <p>Readings/Lecture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See the one page interview by Deborah Solomon, "Questions for Dambisa Moyo: The Anti-Bono," <i>New York Times Magazine</i> (19 February 2009). • Nicholas Kristof, "Where Sweatshops are a Dream," <i>The New York Times</i> (14 January 2009). • Silverstein, Ken. "Shopping for Sweat: The human cost of a two-dollar T-shirt," <i>Harper's Magazine</i> (January 2010). • Hellweg, (2008). "Globalization, Policy Constraints, and Vote Choice", <i>Journal of Politics</i>, vol. 70 (4), pp. 1128-1141.
Week 8	<p>Political Economy of Financial Crises</p> <p>Readings/Lecture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hall, Peter A. (2012). "The Economics and Politics of the Euro Crisis", <i>German Politics</i>, vol 21, no. 4, pp. 355-371 • Peter Hall (2014). "Varieties of Capitalism and the Euro Crisis", <i>West European Politics</i>, vol. 37, no. 6, pp. 1223-1243. <p>Research Paper Due</p>
Week 9	<p>Political Economy of Health</p> <p>Readings/Lecture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 1 and 4, Mojola, S.A.. "Love, Money, and HIV: Becoming a Modern African Woman in the Age of AIDS" <p>Exam 2</p>