

Syllabus “Comparative Political Economy”

Higher School of Economics
Center for the Study of Institutions and Development

Spring 2018

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Syllabus Author: Israel Marques II
Credits: 4
Contact Hours: 56
Self-study Hours: 96
Educational Format: Without online courses

INSTRUCTORS

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COURSE DESCRIPTION, LEARNING OBJECTIVES, AND STUDENT COMPETENCIES

This course broadly aims to make Masters’ students in the “Applied Politics” and “Politics, Economics, and Philosophy” programs (41.04.04) familiar with the major concepts, theories, and debates in comparative political economy. It meets the educational standards of the Higher School of Economics for these programs and the curriculum as of 2017.

The course has two primary goals. First, the course seeks to provide students with a broad overview of key debates in the literature on comparative political economy and to get them acquainted with key works in these debates. Second, students will be taught how to develop their own research questions, formulate hypotheses, and choose an appropriate research design to test them.

As a results students should

Know:

- The core debates animating research in comparative political economy
- The key literature that forms the foundation of specific debates in comparative political economy
- Contemporary advances in research design and their trade-offs

Be able to:

- Identify key components of the research designs of article on comparative political economy
- Critique the research designs of articles on comparative political economy
- Precisely formulate research questions and develop research designs to help study them
- Name the trade-offs that their research designs entail

Have:

- The skills necessary to quickly summarize major research areas in comparative political economy and identify shortcomings in them
- The skills to evaluate scientific arguments and the evidence used to support them
- The skills needed to develop a research design for original projects

This course is strongly related and complementary to compulsory courses in the masters' programs (e.g. Modern Political Science, Comparative Political Economy) and provides the basic concepts, knowledge, and skills needed for courses in the 2nd year. The course also provides basic skills necessary for students to plan and carry out their term papers.

Prerequisites: None

Language of Instruction: English

Course Type: Elective

CONTENT OF THE COURSE

Session 1. Introduction to Comparative Political Economy

This session will introduce students to the course and its policies. It will then provide students with a basic introduction to one of the core foundations of comparative political economy: social choice theory. In particular, the session will provide students with the intuition behind rational choice theories and formal models for voting behavior and preference aggregation.

Session 2. Causal Inference and Endogeneity

This session will introduce students to the basic problems of causal inference and of making causally valid inferences in the social sciences. It will also introduce students to the types of solutions that scholars deploy to overcome these problems in real research. It will also overview debates about the trade-offs between causal rigor and the limitations of these methods.

Session 3. Research Design and Writing a Paper

This session will cover advice for organizing and writing up an original research question. We will discuss how to choose a good research question, how to conduct a

literature review and generate hypotheses, and how to choose an appropriate research design for testing theories.

Session 4. Social Policy

This session will introduce the basic concepts and definitions that animate current debates on social policy and the formation of the welfare state. Students will be introduced to the Varieties of Capitalism framework for thinking about the purpose of the welfare state and to the implications of this framework for social policy design and outcomes. The appropriateness of these theories will then be discussed with respect to the developing world.

Session 5. Social Policy Continued

This session will focus on explanations for individual-level preferences for social policy and the ways in which these preferences can be aggregated to understand welfare state outcomes. The session will also discuss the role of ideology and of bureaucratic politics in the design of the welfare state and its outcomes.

Session 6. Political Machines

This session will discuss the construction of voter-politician linkages and the various strategies used to achieve this. Particular emphasis will be placed on the contrast between clientalistic strategies of voter attachment as opposed to those involving distributive or ideological appeals. This session will also examine various different forms of patronage politics and clientalistic strategies in greater depth.

Session 7. Institutions and Growth

This session will discuss the classical literature on the relationship between institutions and growth. It will introduce basic concepts in this literature, as well as discuss the endogeneity problems inherent in it. A heavy emphasis will be placed on the ways in which scholars have attempted to disentangle the effects of institutions on growth and verify the direction of causality, as well as critiques of these attempts.

Session 8. Institutions and Growth Continued

This session will continue the discussion on institutions and growth by emphasizing more contemporary contributions. It will primarily focus on institutional challenges to investment beyond the traditional predatory state, as well as the various institutional mechanisms that can be used by the state to promote investment besides standard electoral accountability.

Session 9. Interests Groups and Lobbying

This session will discuss classic models of collective action, interest group politics, and lobbying behavior. It will also discuss the implications of these models for how and when interest groups participate in politics, how and when politicians are receptive to them, and the policy outcomes that will result.

Session 10. Autocracy and Development

This session introduces basic political economy models of autocratic politics and their implications for economic development. The session will particularly focus on how autocratic regimes come to and reproduce the power and the implications of the strategies they use to do so for broader economic outcomes and policymaking.

Session 11. Corruption

This session introduces basic political economy models of corruption and discusses how supply and demand for corruption are shaped by market and non-market factors. Particular attention is paid to recent advances in explanations for where corruption should be observed and in the institutions that best serve to combat it or enable it.

Session 12. Natural Resources

This session focuses on the role of natural resources in politics and political economy models of how they shape markets, the incentives of economic and political actors, and the quality of institutions. Particular focus is placed on the literature on the resource curse, the evidence that is used to support (or refute) that argument, and recent advances in how to study the relationship between natural resources, institutions, and economic outcomes.

GRADING

30%	Three referee reports
30%	Seminar paper
30%	Final
10%	Discussion during seminar

GRADING TOOLS

Three referee reports on any of the articles or books on the syllabus. The report must be circulated to the class prior to our meeting. E-mail is fine. These are not literature reviews, but should demonstrate your analytical skills.

The reports should have three components:

- The report should briefly (one paragraph) sum up the main argument made by the author and the evidence provided.
- The report should contain an evaluation and critique of the author's argument and evidence. Does the author's argument make sense? Why or why not? Does the evidence (if any) comport with his/her argument? Why or why not? Do you know of other evidence that undermines (or supports) the author's argument? Does one of the other readings for that day offer a perspective that is discordant with the perspective offered by the author? This section should constitute the lion's share of the paper.

- The report should conclude with a recommendation (reject the manuscript, major revision, minor revision, publish as is) to the (fictitious) editor.

These reports should be 2-3 pages. The first referee report is due by 2/28, the second is due by 04/04, and the third is due by 5/30. **Each report constitutes 10% of the final grade.**

One seminar paper, due June 12. In session 3, we will discuss research strategies. The paper should be about 10-15 (but can be longer) pages and can be either:

- A research proposal that identifies a theoretical or empirical puzzle worth exploring, reviews and critiques existing literature, lays out hypotheses to be tested, identifies appropriate methods for testing the argument, and discusses the potential strength and weaknesses of the proposal. Research proposals need not actually collect the data and conduct the analyses, although it is hoped that this can be done in the future.
- A research paper that is written with the goal of submission to an academic journal. It includes all the steps of a research proposal, but also conducts some preliminary data collection and analysis.

A weak essay will simply do the above. A strong paper will propose a novel topic that sheds light on an important debate, identify how and why this paper may make a contribution to the literature, and propose a reasonable research strategy. A strong paper will also include a careful critique of the research design identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the proposal. This is a chance for you to begin to develop your own ideas for research even if you do not have time to actually collect the data necessary to assess the argument.

To assist in the writing process, we will ask you to submit some preliminary assignment: a one-page research proposal describing two or three potential research questions, dependent variable, possible sources of data, etc. for the paper, due before March 7, comprehensive outlines, due by May 30; and a full draft of the paper, due during the final class. In all, the paper and related assignments are worth **30% of the final grade.**

Failure to submit a research paper will result in a failing grade.

Final Exam. An exam based on all material of the semester will be given the week of June 18-30. **30% of the final grade**

Discussion. A critical component of the course is lively discussion of the week's readings. You should be prepared to discuss each reading on the syllabus for each week. You have not really done the readings until you are able to succinctly restate the argument, describe the methodology, and identify some strengths and weaknesses of the

work. In other words, reading the article once, or worse, skimming the abstract, the introduction and conclusion alone, will not be sufficient. We will discuss several strategies for reading articles to get the most out of them.

You should assess the logical consistency, clarity, and novelty of the theoretical argument. Does it produce new insights? Are the assumptions of the theory clear and reasonable? Is the logic of the theory internally consistent? Do the hypotheses flow logically from the theory? Does the theory generate hypotheses that could be tested, but are not? Does the theory suggest possible causal mechanisms? Are those mechanisms tested?

You should also assess the evidence provided in support of the argument. Are the empirical tests convincing? Are the procedures used to assess the argument described adequately? Are the measures valid and reliable? Does the author consider multiple mechanisms which may link variables? Are other interpretations of the evidence more plausible? What of the possibility of reverse causality, omitted variable bias, selection bias, and endogeneity? How important are these problems? Can they be addressed? If so, how? What other tests could have been done to assess the argument?

You should also consider the implications of the argument. Has the author made claims that extend beyond the evidence? Are the findings important? If so, for what? For substantive outcomes? For normative reasons? For social science? (Filling a hole in the literature is not always a reason to write an article. Some holes aren't worth filling.) Has the author convinced you that you should care about the finding? How does this work relate to similar work? To what related topics could the theory, evidence, or research design apply? Are there policy implications for the work?

SOURCES

1. Main Literature List

1. The Oxford Handbook of Political Institutions. Edited by R. A. W. Rhodes, Sarah A. Binder and Bert A. Rockman Oxford University Press, 2008. URL: <http://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199548460.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780199548460>
2. The Oxford Handbook of Public Management ed. by Ewan Ferlie, Laurence E. Lynn, Christopher Pollitt. - Oxford Handbooks Online, 2007. URL: <http://eds.b.ebscohost.com/eds/detail/detail?vid=6&sid=da439d4b-a0a5-46a4-9abf-56fc38645fca%40sessionmgr104&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWRzLWxpdmU%3d#AN=edsnuk.vtls001955235&db=edsnuk>

2. Additional Literature List

1. The Oxford Handbook of Political Methodology. - [ed. by Janet M. Box-Steffensmeier, Henry E. Brady, and David Collier]. – Oxford, NY: Oxford University Press, 2008. - ISBN: 9780199286546. — Режим доступа: <http://proxylibrary.hse.ru:2089/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199286546.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780199286546?rskey=SCjU75&result=57>

2. The Oxford Handbook of Political Science. - [ed. by Robert E. Goodin]. – Oxford, NY: Oxford University Press, 2011. – ISBN: 9780199604456. — Режим доступа: <http://proxylibrary.hse.ru:2089/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199604456.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780199604456?rskey=SCjU75&result=60>

3. Software

	Name	Availability
1.	Microsoft Windows 7 Professional RUS Microsoft Windows 10 Microsoft Windows 8.1 Professional RUS	Available from the university's internal network (Contract)
2.	Microsoft Office Professional Plus 2010	Available from the university's internal network (Contract)

4. Professional Databases, Informational Resources, and Internet-resources (electronic educational resources)

Name	Availability
Pro-Quest Ebook Central	Available from the university's internal network (Contract)
Oxford Scholarship Online	Available from the university's internal network (Contract)
JSTOR	Available from the university's internal network (Contract)
Annual Reviews	Available from the university's internal network (Contract)
Единое окно к образовательным ресурсам	http://window.edu.ru

[Электронный ресурс].	
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5. Technical Resources for the Course

Classrooms for lectures are equipped to allow for presentations of textual descriptions, figures, and data corresponding to the program for the course and include:

- PC with Internet access (operating system, office software, antivirus software)
- Multimedia projectors with remote control