

POLI 7903
Special Topics in American Politics:
Seminar in American Political Economy

Fall 2011

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The purpose of this seminar is to survey the extensive and growing literature on domestic political economy. A wide range of questions has been raised in this body of research. What are the effects of economic conditions on mass political behavior? How do political elites and masses influence macroeconomic outcomes? Is there evidence that economic conditions are (or can be) manipulated by political elites for electoral gain in democratic societies? To what extent does the public (governmental) sector draw resources from the private (economic) sector, and what explains such patterns? Once government has drawn resources from the private sector, how are these resources allocated among competing claimants? What explains distributions of government expenditures among different programs, agencies, and expenditure categories? Finally, what is the role of government in shaping levels of income inequality and poverty in democratic societies? What are the implications of income inequality and poverty for politics and policy?

The field of political economy is very broad, and it is impossible to cover all relevant topics in a single seminar. Given this, in this seminar we focus on three major issues. First, we will explore the interaction between the political and economic spheres in the United States and, to a lesser extent, in other advanced industrial countries. In this section of the course we will examine the demand for economic outcomes in the United States and other western democracies by discussing the literature on economic determinants of mass political behavior and attitudes. We will also examine the supply of macroeconomic policies and outcomes by focusing on the political (electoral) business cycle and the political determinants of macroeconomic policy.

Prerequisites

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- There are no formal prerequisites for this seminar. However, because this is an advanced seminar with

2. **Final Examination.** A comprehensive final examination will be required of all students. Information pertaining to the format of the final

Academic Misconduct Statement

Academic misconduct is defined by the Code of Student Conduct. You are encouraged to familiarize yourself with the LSU policy on academic misconduct, particularly regarding plagiarism. The LSU Code of Student Conduct can be found on the web site for the LSU Dean of Students:

<http://saa.lsu.edu/Code%20of%20Student%20Conduct%20August%202009.pdf>

Academic misconduct is a serious violation of university policy, but more importantly it is a significant scholarly violation for political scientists. Plagiarism and other forms of academic misconduct will not be tolerated in this course. Charges of academic misconduct will be turned over to the Dean of Students for appropriate disciplinary action. **I am serious about this.**

Schedule of Class Meetings

August	24	Introduction to American Political Economy
	31	APSA conference (no class meeting)
September	7	Politics and Macroeconomic Outcomes
	14	Politics and Macroeconomic Outcomes
	21	Public Reactions to the Economy
	28	Public Reactions to the Economy
October	5	Public Reactions to the Economy
	12	The Size and Growth of the Public Sector
	19	The Size and Growth of the Public Sector
	26	The Size and Growth of the Public Sector
November	2	The Politics of Income Inequality and Poverty
	9	The Politics of Income Inequality and Poverty
	16	The Politics of Income Inequality and Poverty
	23	The Politics of Income Inequality and Poverty
	30	The Politics of Income Inequality and Poverty
December	9	Final exam and seminar paper due