Advanced Theories of Political Economy  
(PSC 8453)  

Professor Stephen B. Kaplan  
sbkaplan@gwu.edu  
(202) 994-6680

Class Meetings  
1957 E Street, room 316  
Tuesday 3:30-5:30pm

Office Hours  
470 Monroe Hall (2115 G Street)  
Thursday 1:30-3:30pm, or by appt.

Course Goals and Descriptions:

This course introduces doctoral students to the political analysis of economic policymaking. It covers the politics of international and comparative economics. From the domestic perspective, we will focus on the preferences of actors over economic policies and how institutions influence the transformation of preferences into policies and outcomes. From the international perspective, we will investigate the effects of international economic factors (globalization, finance, trade, debt, etc.) on domestic political processes and outcomes. The goal of this class is to make students conversant in the dominant themes of modern political economy, preparing them to do original research in the subfield.

Learning Objectives

1. To survey the state of the contemporary international and comparative political economy literature.
2. To gain substantive knowledge about trade, finance, globalization, debt, and economic development.
3. To critically compare and evaluate diverse approaches to the subject.
4. To prepare for independent research in international political economy.
5. Compose a draft of their dissertation prospectus/or several research proposals on topics of potential future research.

Blackboard

This course will use the Blackboard system. Many readings and announcements will be posted on Blackboard (for readings, see “Electronic Reserves”). I strongly encourage you to make sure you have access to and are familiar with the Blackboard system as soon as possible.

Class Policies:

Please respect the following policies, which are intended to ensure that everyone in this class has an interesting and enjoyable learning experience:

Cell Phones and related devices: Before you enter the classroom, turn off all cell phones, pagers, blackberries, and other devices.
**Laptops:** You are welcome to bring a laptop to class, but the volume must be set to “mute.”

**Email:** If you have lengthy questions or comments about the course, I encourage you to come talk to me in person. In addition to regular office hours, I am happy to set up appointments to meet with you. Please keep email communications brief.

**Academic Integrity**

I expect full compliance with the GW Code of Academic Integrity, which states in part: “Academic dishonesty is defined as cheating of any kind, including misrepresenting one’s own work, taking credit for the work of others without crediting them and without appropriate authorization, and the fabrication of information.”

For the remainder of the code, see: [http://www.gwu.edu/~ntegrity/code.html](http://www.gwu.edu/~ntegrity/code.html). If you are unsure about any aspect of this policy the Writing Center ([http://www.gwu.edu/~gwriter/](http://www.gwu.edu/~gwriter/)) can provide assistance on citation or other aspects of writing papers. Claiming ignorance about how or when to cite sources is not an excuse for academic dishonesty.

**Policy on Religious Holidays**

You should notify me during the first week of the semester of your intention to be absent from class on a day(s) of religious observance. If an assignment falls on a day you will be observing a religious holiday, we will work together to find an alternative time to complete the assignment. Please communicate with me about holidays in advance of the original due date.

**Requirements:**

**Class Format:** We meet once weekly to discuss each week’s readings. All students are responsible for being prepared to discuss the required readings. Furthermore, each student will be designated to **co-lead with another student class discussion in two different weeks.** The seminar leaders will post on the discussion board of blackboard five questions meant to spark a rich and compelling discussion during class each week (these discussion questions are due the Sunday before our Tuesday class meetings). The seminar leaders will also be charged with introducing the week’s topic by starting out class with a five-minute overview.

In addition to regular participation and taking two turns at seminar leadership, each student must select one of two options for fulfilling the remaining course requirements:

**Option 1 – A Research Prospectus:** Students selecting this option should write one 20-25 page paper to be completed by **May 1**. This final paper should resemble a dissertation prospectus, outlining a research question, situating it within the existing literature, developing a hypothesis, and proposing a research design for testing it.

**Option 2 – Three Research Proposals:** Students choosing this option should write a research proposal that contains a 1) critical review of the literature on a given week’s topic, and a 2) proposal for future research. These papers should not only propose a promising research design, but also evaluate the
strengths and weaknesses of the theory, research design and empirical methodology of the assigned readings. Those students who choose this option should select three different weeks during the course to write their research proposals. Each paper should be about five-to-six double-spaced pages and is due the Sunday before that topic is discussed in Tuesday class. No late papers will be accepted for this option. Please electronically submit a copy over e-mail.

**Assignments and Grading:**

The requirements for the course will have the following weights:

- Participation: 30%
- Seminar Leader: 20%
- One Research Prospectus or Three Research Proposals: 50%

**Texts:** You should buy the following books if you do not already own them. They are classic political economy texts that will serve as important references in your academic future. However, should you wish to defray the cost of buying these books, I will also be making copies available through the Gelman library reserve system. I will disseminate copies of the other readings either electronically through the course’s Blackboard page or the “old school” manner of distributing them in person during class. *I may adjust the readings as necessary – you are responsible for any changes to the readings.*


**Supplemental Information:** The class assumes only a basic familiarity with economic theory, and the results that we work with are straightforward (i.e., none are more advanced than an undergraduate economics course). Students who find themselves lost on the economics should consult an intermediate macroeconomics or international economics textbook. I recommend consulting *Macroeconomics* by Rudiger Dornbusch, Stanley Fischer, and Richard Startz (Irwin-McGraw Hill) and *International Economics: Theory and Policy* by Paul Krugman and Maurice Obstfeld (Addison Wesley). Used copies are very reasonably priced on Amazon.
Course Outlines and Readings:

January 17th: Introduction

Course Overview

Economic Principles—Macroeconomic Policymaking

January 24th: International and Comparative Political Economy

The Discipline: Research Designs and Methodological Approaches


Recommended:


January 31st: Foundations of Political Economy

The Role of Government in the Economy


February 7th: Foundations of Political Economy

Politics and Markets


February 14th: Foundations of Political Economy

Democracy, Economic Institutions, and Development


February 21st: Foundations of Political Economy

Collective Action, Interest Groups, and Rent-Seeking


**February 28th: The Politics of Economic Policymaking**

**Economic Principles**


**Political Economy of Growth and Inflation**


**Recommended:**


March 6th: The Politics of Economic Policymaking

The Political Economy of Adjustment and Reform


March 13th: SPRING BREAK

March 20th: Markets, Welfare, and Society

Economic Principles

Schumpteter, Joseph. 1976 (1942). Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy, pt II (chs. vii (pp.81-87), xi-xiv (pp. 121-164).


March 27th: Markets, Welfare, and Society Part II

Globalization’s Race to the Bottom?


**April 3rd: Political Economy of Global Finance Part I**

*Economic Principles*


*Domestic Interests and Institutions*


*Recommended:*


April 10th: Political Economy of the Finance: Part II

The International Financial System


Background:


April 17th: Political Economy of International Trade I

Economic Principles


Domestic Interests and Institutions


**Recommended:**


**April 24th: The Political Economy of Trade II**

**The World Trading System**


**Final Paper Due May 1st**