

**Economics 410: Political Economy**  
**Syllabus: Winter 2014**  
**Professor: Christopher Ellis**

**Description:** This is a new course in Political Economy. We shall cover topics including corruption, political agency, voting and lobbying, the origins of democracy, and the size and number of nations.

**Materials:** Reading materials will be posted on Blackboard. We shall be reading sections from

- a. Aidt, "Economic Analysis of Corruption: A Survey" *The Economic Journal*, 2003.
- b. Besley, "Principled Agents?" Oxford University Press, 2006, Chpts 1-3.
- c. Grossman and Helpman, "*Special Interest Politics*", MIT Press, 2001
- d. Acemoglu and Robinson, "*Economic Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*", Cambridge University Press, 2006, Chpts. 1-4 and 7.
- e. Alesina, and Spolaore, "*The Size of Nations*", MIT Press, 2003.
- f. Bolton, Roland, and Spolaore, "Economic Theories of the Break-up and Integration of Nations", *European Economic Review*, Vol. 40, 1996.

Copies of the slides I shall use in my lectures may also be found on Blackboard.

**Logistics:** The following will be useful to you

*Class location:* 208 Deady Hall

*Class Times:* Tuesdays and Thursdays 2-3.20pm

*Office Location:* 540 PLC

*Office Hours:* Tuesdays and Thursdays 3.30-4.30pm

*Email:* [cjellis@uoregon.edu](mailto:cjellis@uoregon.edu)

*Phone:* 6-4657

**Evaluation:** There will be one midterm and a final. The weighting on the exams will be as follows, 25% on the midterm and 45% on the final. The final will be comprehensive. The remaining 30% will be for two case studies each of which will be worth 15%. For the case studies you must find an example of one of the topics covered on the course, write a description of your example, and attempt to use the theory developed on the course to analyze your example. Masters students are required to write three case study papers worth 10% each.

**Final Exam:** 1.00pm Tuesday March 18<sup>th</sup> in 208 Deady.

**Grading Policy:** The Economic Department has a grading policy designed to prevent grade inflation. Except in very unusual circumstances there will be no fewer than 55% and no more than 75% A's and B's given.

I grade as follows.

*Step #1 – Initial grade allocation*

- (1) The student in the class with the mean total score receives a B-
- (2) Students with scores within one standard deviation below the mean receive C's.
- (3) Students with scores between one and two standard deviation below the mean receive D's
- (4) Students with scores more than two standard deviation below the mean receive F's
- (5) Students with scores between the mean and one standard deviation above the mean will receive B's
- (6) Students with scores more than one standard deviation above the mean receive A's

*Step #2 – Adjustments*

- (1) Students that perform considerably better on the final exam relative to over the course of the term, and are on the borderline between two grades, will receive a half grade increased over the grade indicated by their overall score.
- (2) If a small number of students receive very low or very high scores relative to the class as a whole, then I will adjust the grades of all students slightly so that these outliers do not move the curve significantly.

Note: My grading policy does **not** imply that 90% plus gets an A, 80% plus gets a B and so on.

**Expectations:** Please note the following

*Attendance:* While attendance is not compulsory, and does not earn class credit, it is highly recommended. I have found that there is a strong correlation between good grades and class attendance.

*Honesty:* It is completely unacceptable to cheat on an exam. During an exam communication with anyone other than the proctor will place you at risk of being considered to be cheating. I will pursue the maximum penalty for anyone caught cheating.

*Office Hours:* Office hours are not substitutes for class attendance. They are best used to help students understand material that they do not fully comprehend in class, get help with their case study projects, and to help with preparation for tests.

**Special Needs:** If you have a learning disability or any kind of special need please contact me very early in the term. This will allow us to work out what best facilitates your success in the class.

**Fragrances:** I am allergic to fragrances please do not wear them to class or office hours.

**Outline:** As this is a brand-new course it is difficult to give a detailed outline; we shall follow the general structure

Weeks 1-3	Corruption
Weeks 3-5	Political Agency
Weeks 5-7	Voting and Lobbying
Weeks 7-8	The Origins of Democracy
Weeks 9-10	The Size and Number of Nations

Please note the following dates

2/11	Midterm exam
2/13	First case study due
2/27	Masters students second case study due
3/13	Second case study due for undergraduates, third case study due for masters students
3/18	Final exam 1.00pm