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Course Description:
This course introduces students to the study of the political economy of advanced capitalist economies. The course is divided into three sections. The first section examines contemporary political economy’s roots in the tradition of classical political economy, associated with theorists such as Adam Smith and Karl Marx, and assesses the ways in which political economy is distinct from both economics and international political economy. The second section explores the various conceptual approaches to the study of political economy and examines the various ways in which they approach some of the key conceptual problematics of political economy: namely, the relationship between material interests, political institutions and economic ideas. The course concludes with a comprehensive examination of a number of significant political economy themes: the evolution of the political economy of the state; the development of ‘varieties of capitalism’; the rise of finance capital and the changes in corporate governance; and the construction and restructuring of the welfare state. Students are not required to have any prior background in economics for this course.
Learning Outcomes

Subject Specific Knowledge
- The fundamentals of Political Economy as an academic discipline distinct from economics
- Understanding of the core insights of Political Economy
- Understanding of the links between Political Economy and Classical Political Economy
- Understanding of the links between Political Economy and Political Science
- Contributions of key thinkers to the development of Political Economy
- Understanding of different conceptual and methodological issues within Political Economy
- Understanding of different analytical traditions within Political Economy
- Understanding of key debates regarding the political economy of Advanced Capitalist Economies

Subject Specific Skills
- Ability to conceptualize the links between politics, economics and sociology
- Identify the different units of analysis that distinguish competing analytical traditions within Comparative Political Economy
- Conceptualize the links between abstract concepts and methods of analysis
- Ability to operationalize relevant concepts and methods of analysis for the purposes of independent research

Transferable skills
- Research design
- Critical writing skills

Course Requirements
Research Proposal: 60%
Final Exam: 30%
Tutorial Participation: 10%

Texts
Ben Clift, Comparative Political Economy: States, Markets and Global Capitalism (Palgrave Macmillan 2014)
Additional readings will be made available either on Blackboard or the reserve desk at the library

Lectures
Lectures will present a structured overview of key aspects of the essential readings as well as important concepts, debates, etc., that are relevant for an understanding of the topic yet not covered in the readings. Lecture slides will be made available on the course website. It is advised that students complete the essential readings prior to attending the lectures.
Research Proposal
Students are required to complete a research proposal worth 60% of their final mark. The purpose of the assignment is to teach students some of the fundamentals of research design as they pertain to conducting research in political economy. The research proposal is a cumulative assignment that runs throughout the duration of the course and is broken down into a number of constituent parts:

1. Formulating your research question (250-300 words) 5%
2. Annotated Bibliography (500-750 words) 10%
3. Literature Review (1,500 words) 20%
4. Concept Paper: units of analysis and relevant actors (1,000 words) 15%
5. Methods and Evidence (500 words) 10%
Each component will be submitted at staggered intervals throughout the term, enabling students to benefit from feedback for the next component.

Exam
A final comprehensive exam will be held in the exam period at the end of the semester assessing students on their comprehension of the essential materials assigned in the course.

Course Website
The course site will provide you with copies of an assortment of course documents, including a copy of this syllabus, lecture notes, and readings.

Phones and Laptops:
While in class, it is expected that all students will turn off their phones. While laptops can be used, current academic research has demonstrated that students who rely on laptops in class do not retain as much information as students who do not use laptops. In other words, contrary to what you may have been told in high school, laptops are NOT a helpful pedagogical tool. Given that all lectures will be posted on the blackboard, it is strongly recommended that students refrain from using their laptops as much as possible.

Cheating and Academic Dishonesty
All assignments in this class are designed to assess your individual knowledge and understanding of the material covered in the course. Thus, cheating or plagiarism - in any form - will not be tolerated. The work you present must be entirely your own. All individuals involved in an act of academic dishonesty will fail the course.

Discrimination
The University of Oregon is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity institution. Discrimination on the basis of any of the categories covered in the University’s anti-discrimination policy will not be tolerated in this class. If you have a concern in this regard, please contact the Office of Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity at 346-3123.

Special Needs
If you have a condition that inhibits learning or evaluation under customary circumstances, please request a letter from Disability Services that verifies your situation and states the accommodations that can be made to improve your learning environment.
I. Introduction: The Origins of Political Economy

Week 1: Introduction: Capitalism and Classical Political Economy
In this week, we examine the ways in which political economy is distinct from the disciplinary study of economics. We will also examine political economy’s roots in the tradition of classical political economy associated with Adam Smith, Karl Marx and Friedrich List in particular.

Essential Readings:
Clift, chapter 2 & 3.

Week 2: Comparative Political Economy: Defining a Discipline
This week looks at the disciplinary development of ‘comparative’ political economy through an examination of how the tradition of classical political economy evolved throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and was appropriated by practitioners of contemporary ‘political science’.

Essential Readings:
Clift, chapter 4.

II. Conceptual Orientations and Units of Analysis

Week 3: ‘Cui bono?’ Interest-Based Analysis and Political Economy
These week looks at various was of conceptualizing ‘material’ interests as an important factor in understanding political economy. Emphasis will be placed on conceptualizing interests at the level of the individual and of social class.

Essential Readings:

Week 4: Institutional Analysis and Political Economy
This week examines the contribution of institutionalism to the study of political economy. Emphasis will be placed on conceptualizing the importance of institutions as mediating factors of political economic agency.

Essential Readings:
Clift, chapter 5.

**Week 5: Ideational Analysis and Political Economy**

This week looks at the development of constructivism and the importance of ideas and ‘social facts’ for the study of political economy as a contested terrain of meaning. From here, we will look at the significance of concepts such as ‘hegemony’ in the construction of a consensus around conceptions of political economy.

*Essential Readings:*
Clift, chapter 7.

### III. Understanding Advanced Capitalist Economies

**Week 6: The Political Economy of the State**

This week looks at key debates pertaining to the relationship between the state and the economy. From here, we will look at the challenges posed by globalization to state capacity as part of an attempt at conceptualizing state intervention in the age of neoliberalism.

*Essential Readings:*
Clift, chapter 8.

**Week 7: The Political Economy of Finance and Corporate Governance**

This week looks at various analyses of the rise of finance capital and the evolution of corporate governance.

*Essential Readings:*
Clift, chapter 10.

**Week 8: The Political Economy of Welfare**

This week examines the construction and restructuring of the welfare state in a variety of different national contexts. Key debates pertaining to the importance of ideas, institutions and interests in understanding the contested processes of welfare state restructuring will be discussed.
Essential Readings:
Clift, chapter 11.

Week 9: Comparative Capitalisms
This week looks at the evolution of capitalist diversity in the post-war period. Emphasis will be placed on the debates pertaining to the alleged convergence of the advanced capitalist economies around a dominant Liberal Market Economy (LME) model.

Essential Readings:
Clift, chapter 9.
Peter A. Hall and David Soskice, Varieties of Capitalism, introduction.
Leo Panitch and Sam Gindin, ‘Euro-Capitalism and American Empire,’ in David Coates.

IV. Conclusions

Week 10: The Comparative Method and CPE
This week will address some of the outstanding methodological issues to the comparative study of political economy.

Essential Readings:
Clift, chapters 12 & 13.

Journals
New Political Economy
New Political Science
Studies in Political Economy
Competition and Change
Capital & Class
Economy and Society
Critical Review
Contemporary European Studies
Socialist Register