

## CSS 391 - SENIOR COLLOQUIUM

College of Social Studies

POLITICAL ECONOMY

Fall 2015 WF 2:40-4pm

**Prof. Gil Skillman**  
325 PAC x2359

**Hours: Th 1:30-3**  
**and by appointment.**

This course studies political economy from the vantage point of a broader distinction between the *public* and *private* spheres of social life: we consider what that distinction might mean and how it matters, how the two spheres are manifested and interrelate in actual societies, and how the appropriate or “optimal” boundary between the two spheres might be determined. There are a number of lines of social inquiry out there that touch on this distinction. Perhaps none of them fits exactly with our purposes in this course, but the analytical framework of *game theory* will serve, in a broad way, as the foundation for our inquiries.

One difficulty in conducting this course is that the class is relatively large for the intended “colloquial” format. We’ll accommodate this difficulty by combining interactive lectures (at first) with instructor-facilitated class discussions. In any case, broad-based student involvement in discussing the material is essential to making the course work, so class participation will be an important part (10%) of the final grade. Attendance and, as past experience has proved, punctuality are important aspects of class participation, prompting the following policies. First, regular attendance is noted and strongly encouraged (given that it’s difficult to participate when you’re not in class) although not required. Absences necessitated by medical and family emergencies or employment interviews will of course be completely excused. Second, if you do choose to attend class, *please show up on time*, as late arrivals impair focus and disrupt the flow of discussion. Consequently, repetitive late arrival will count against the class participation portion of the grade.

Course evaluation will also be based on a series of “opportunities for focused thought” (OFTs) (40%), a group presentation (25%), and a 15-20 page term paper (25%). Group presentations will take place in the last two weeks of class, during which the four regular class periods will be supplemented with a class outside the regular slot. Final papers are due on Thursday, December 17<sup>th</sup> by 6 pm. You have an automatic extension to Friday December 18<sup>th</sup> no later than 6 p.m., without penalty. If I receive your project any time between Friday at 6 pm and Saturday at noon, it receives a five-point penalty. After that there will be an additional penalty of one point off per hour or fraction thereof. Please send me your final paper as an e-mail attachment.

The course will proceed as follows. It’s my responsibility to inform you of the material to be covered for each upcoming week, and to indicate the key questions that are likely to be addressed. Please plan to have the indicated readings done before it is taken up in class.

**Required Texts:**

Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson, *Economic Origins of Dictatorship & Democracy*

Kaushik Basu, *Prelude to Political Economy*

Albert Hirschman, *Exit, Voice, and Loyalty*

Robert Nozick, *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*

John Rawls, *Justice as Fairness: A Restatement*

Paul Seabright, *The Company of Strangers*

Bruce Wydick, *Games in Economic Development*

All of these texts will be available for purchase at Broad Street Books. Additional readings will be made available by suitable means, e.g. via the course Moodle page or distributed directly to your CSS mailboxes. I reserve the right, with due notice, to add required texts as deemed appropriate for the evolving needs of the course.

**A Note on Disability Resources:** Wesleyan University is committed to ensuring that all qualified students with disabilities are afforded an equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from its programs and services. To receive accommodations, a student must have a documented disability as defined by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the ADA Amendments Act of 2008, and provide documentation of the disability. Since accommodations may require early planning and generally are not provided retroactively, please contact Disability Resources as soon as possible. If you believe that you need accommodations for a disability, please contact Dean Patey in Disability Resources, located in North College, Room 021, or call 860-685-5581 for an appointment to discuss your needs and the process for requesting accommodations.

## Course Outline

### I. A Framework for the Study of Political Economy (2.5 weeks)

#### A. Explaining and Assessing Social Outcomes

Basu: Preface, 1; Elster, *The Cement of Society*: Introduction; Blaut, *The Colonizer's Model of the World*: 2.

#### B. Social Interactions as Games

Poundstone, *Prisoner's Dilemma*: 3; Basu: 2, 3.1-3.2, 4.5; Wydick, *Games in Economic Development*: 2; Skillman: "Social Situations as Games" and "Equilibrium in Rational Choice and Evolutionary Games"; Cooper, *Coordination Games*: Preface, 1.

Basu: 9, 10; Rawls, Part I; Haidt, *The Righteous Mind*, Part I

Poundstone, *Prisoner's Dilemma*: 6; Dixit and Skeath, *Games of Strategy*: 3,6;  
*Economic Applications* 4, 5, 17.1-17.4; Taylor, *The Possibility of Cooperation*: 3, 4.

### **C. Equilibrium Selection and Social Change**

Caporaso and Levine, *Theories of Political Economy*: 1; Basu: 6; Papandreou,  
*Externalities and Institutions*: 2, 3; Hirschman 1-4, 9

Basu: 4; Elster, *The Cement of Society*: 3; Stout, "Social Norms and Other-Regarding Preferences"; Bicchieri, *Rationality and Coordination*: 6; Aoki, *Toward a Comparative Institutional Analysis*: 1; Ostrom, *Understanding Institutional Diversity*: 1;

Rawls, Parts II-III; Nozick, *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*: 3, 7; Arrow, *Social Choice and Justice*: 8, 13; Skyrms, *Evolution of the Social Contract*: 1.  
Elster, *Nuts and Bolts*: 15, 16; Knight, *Institutions and Social Conflict*: 1, 2.

## **II. Articulation of Public and Private Spheres (4 weeks)**

### **A. Conflict and Cooperation in Anarchy**

Klein and Edgar, *The Dawn of Human Culture*: 1; Paul Seabright, *The Company of Strangers*: 2-5; Aoki, *Toward a Comparative Institutional Analysis*: 2; Ostrom, *Governing the Commons*: 3; Haddock, "Force, Threat, Negotiation: The Private Enforcement of Rights"; Skyrms, *Evolution of the Social Contract*: 3;

### **B. Emergence of the State**

Basu: 8; Michael Taylor, *The Possibility of Cooperation*, Ch. 6; Aoki, Ch. 3; Dixit, Ch. 5.4; John Gledhill, "Introduction: the comparative analysis of social and political transitions" in *State and Society: The Emergence and Development of Hierarchy and Political Centralization*; Nozick, Chs. 5-6; *Chiefdoms: Power, Economy and Ideology*, Chs. 1-2; Cohen, "Introduction" and Service, "Classical and Modern Theories of the Origin of the State"; Carneiro, "Political Expansion as an Expression of the Principle of Competitive Exclusion"

### **C. Rule of Law and the Modern State**

Barry Weingast, "The Political Foundations of Democracy and the Rule of Law"; Brennan and Buchanan, *The Reason of Rules*: 1-2.

### **D. Articulation of the Private Sphere**

Pejovich, *The Economics of Property Rights*: 2; Heilbroner, *The Making of Economic Society*: 2, 3; Seabright, *The Company of Strangers*: 8-12.

### **E. Democratization**

Rueschemeyer, Stephens & Stephens, *Capitalist Development and Democracy*, Chs. 1-3; Acemoglu and Robinson, *Economic Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*; Boix, *Democracy and Redistribution*

Arrow, "A Difficulty in the Concept of Social Welfare"; Elster, "The Market and the Forum: Three Varieties of Political Theory";

## **III. Nexus of Private and Public Spheres (3 weeks)**

### **A. The Private-Public Nexus: Social and Economic Influences on Democracy**

Putnam, *Making Democracy Work*: 1-4; Lily Tsai, *Accountability without Democracy*  
Bartels, *Unequal Democracy*: 9

### **B. The Private-Public Nexus: Political Influences on Growth and Development**

Sen, *Development as Freedom*: 6-8; Wydick, *Games in Economic Development*: 9, 10  
Wade, *Governing the Market*; Gradstein and Konrad, "The Development Puzzle";

### **C. The Balance of Private and Public**

Acemoglu and Robinson, *Why Nations Fail*; Morris and Sayre, *Why Economies Fail*

**Group formation and individual topic proposals due Friday, November 6th**

## **IV. Global Political Economy (2 weeks)**

### **A. Globalization and National Sovereignty**

David Held, *Democracy and the Global Order*; Nathan Jensen, *Nation-States and the Multinational Corporation*; Basu, *Beyond the Invisible Hand*: 9, 10. Seabright 16,17

### **B. International Political and Economic Relations**

Stephen Pinker, *The Better Angels of Our Nature*

**V. Group Presentations (1.5 weeks)**

**November 30<sup>st</sup> through December 11<sup>th</sup>.**