



APPLIES TO ACADEMIC YEAR 2008/2009

GRA 5916 Core Concepts in Political Economy

Program

Core Course, Master of Science in Political Economy

Responsible for the course

Nick Sitter

Department

Term

According to study plan

ECTS Credits

6

Language of instruction

English

This is an introductory political science course. It requires no previous knowledge and is primarily designed for students taking the MSc in Political Economy. The focus is on the fundamental core concepts in political economy.

The central themes include institutions and public choice; varieties of capitalism and political systems; and international relations and international political economy.

Learning outcome

This course provides an introduction to the concepts at the core of political economy in general, in terms of institutions and policy making as well as with respect to both national and international political economy. It is designed to introduce the students to the core concepts in the study of political economy and set the scene for the specialisation courses in the MSc in Political Economy programme. The first set of themes relate to democratic theory and constitutional design, and to institutional theories. This includes focus on how institutions order political and economic decision-making and on the interaction between the two, and introduces theories of the state, welfare and justice. The second broad theme links these questions to the development, spread and prevalence of liberal democracy. Core questions include institutional design and the delegation of power, how citizen input is translated into policy, as well as different mechanisms for citizen control and public choice analyses of the growth of state spending.

Prerequisites

A Bachelor's degree qualifying for admission to the MSc programme.

Compulsory literature

Books:

Lijphart, Arend. 1999. Patterns of democracy: Government forms and performance in thirty-six countries. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press. Chapters 1,2,3,4 5, 14,16 and 17
Shepsle, Kenneth A. and Mark S. Bonchek. 1997. Analyzing Politics: Rationality, Behavior and Institutions. New York: W.W. Norton

Collection of articles:

Compendium of Journal Articles

Recommended literature

Books:

Laver, Michael. 1997. Private desires, political action: An invitation to the politics of rational choice. London: Sage Publications
Mueller, Dennis C.. 2003. Public Choice III. Rev. and expanded ed. of Public choice II. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Selected chapters
Weingast, Barry R. and Donald A. Wittman, eds. 2006. The Oxford handbook of political economy. Oxford : Oxford University Press. Selected chapters

Course outline

1. Introduction to political economy: democracy, institutions and decision making; institutionalism and rational choice theories of the state; legitimacy, welfare and theories of justice.

2. Public choice and institutional design, how institutions affect games and outcomes; private desires and public goods, collective action problems; control mechanisms.
3. Governance problems related to decentralization and fiscal federalism, bureaucracy and political governance, rent seeking and interest groups, and the growth of governance.
4. The spread of liberal democracy and varieties of capitalism: comparative analysis of the institutions of liberal democracy; elections, party competition and citizen control.

Computer-based tools

None

Course structure

36 hours of lectures.

Evaluation

Your course grade will be based on the following activities and weights:

30% Class work (in the form of a mix of some/ all of the following: hand in of case write ups, projects, and homeworks; presentations and class participation; in class midterm and quizzes). Final written 3 hour exam accounts for 70% of the grade.

Both parts of the evaluation need to be passed in order to get a grade in the course.

Specific Information regarding student evaluation will be provided in class. Please note that while attendance is not compulsory in all courses, it is the students responsibility to obtain any information provided in class that is not included on the course homepage/Blackboard or text book.

Evaluation code(s)

GRA 59161 accounts for 100 % of the final grade in the course GRA 5916.

Aids at the examination

A bilingual dictionary. Exam aids at written examinations are explained under exam information in our web-based Student handbook. Please note use of calculator and dictionary. <http://www.bi.edu/studenthandbook/examaids>

Makeup exam

Re-takes are only possible at the next time a course will be held. When the course evaluation has a separate exam code for each part of the evaluation it is possible to retake parts of the evaluation. Otherwise, the whole course must be re-evaluated when a student wants to retake an exam. Retake examinations entail an extra examination fee.

Honor Code

Academic honesty and trust are important to all of us as individuals, and represent values that are encouraged and promoted by the honor code system. This is a most significant university tradition. Students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the ideals of the honor code system, to which the faculty are also deeply committed.

Any violation of the honor code will be dealt with in accordance with BI's procedures for cheating. These issues are a serious matter to everyone associated with the programs at BI and are at the heart of the honor code and academy integrity. If you have any questions about your responsibilities under the honor code, please ask.