

**POLS 3617- American Political Economy
Spring 2020**

Course

BCH 302

MWF 1:25-2:15p

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This course is designed to introduce undergraduates to a number of aspects of political economy. First, we will analyze two of the principle theoretical works in the field that examine politics from an economics perspective. Second, we will address macroeconomic issues and economic policies from an American politics perspective. Finally, the course will address more fundamental and philosophical questions concerning the relationship between economics and politics, in general, and capitalism and democracy, in particular.

Throughout the semester, we will use examples drawn from the entire span of United States history to empirically demonstrate the concepts discussed. As such, there is significant attention paid to historical materials and case studies. The approach is designed to also give students a broad overview of the economic and political debates that have influenced American political history since the founding of the country.

Together, students should develop a firm understanding of a number of theoretical concepts typically employed in political economy as well as an ability to use empirical examples to demonstrate the theories. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, students should be able to ask critical questions of economics from a political view, politics from an economic view, and discuss the relationship between the two.

Texts

The following texts are required. The reading assignments for this course are essential and include all assigned pages. Any student who intends to do well will find the readings indispensable. This is a lecture-based course, but I will not highlight all of important points in the books. Because you are responsible for all of the assigned material, I strongly recommend a thorough and timely reading of all of the assignments.

- Downs, Anthony. 1957. *An Economic Theory of Democracy*. New York: Harper and Row.
- Gosling, James J. and Marc Allen Eisner. 2013. *Economics, Politics, and Public Policy*, 2nd edition. New York: ME Sharpe, Inc.
- Additional readings posted on HuskyCT.

Requirements

Your grade will be based on two analytic outlines and two exams.

The exams will consist of multiple-choice and take-home essay questions that address the subjects covered in the preceding section of the course. Each exam is worth 150 points: 100 points for the multiple-choice section and 50 points for the essay section of the exam.

You are required to write two analytic outlines: one of the Downs book and one of assigned parts of the Olson book. An analytic outline consists of the author's main points organized and outlined in a manner that resembles the author's argument. On average, each chapter should be approximately one or two pages long in outline form. The Downs outline is worth 90 points; the Olson outline is worth 10 points.

There is a total of 400 points for the course and final grades will be calculated on a standard curve:

A : 370-400 points.
A-: 360-369 points.
B+: 350-359 points.
B : 330-349 points.
B-: 320-329 points.
C+: 310-319 points.
C : 290-309 points.
C-: 280-289 points.
D+: 270-279 points.
D : 240-269 points.
F : below 239 points.

The best way to perform well in this course is to attend and be prepared for each class. The exams and papers will consist of material that may only be addressed in the assigned readings or only in lecture. If you choose to skip a reading or a class, you will likely have a more difficult time with the exams. Additionally, I encourage discussion and debate in class and on the HuskyCT discussion board. Participation (in-class *and* online) will improve your knowledge of the material, and marginal final grades of active students will be given a second consideration.

Administrative Policies

There will be no make-up assignments for unexcused absences and late papers will not be accepted. An absence is excused only in the case of an emergency; documentation is required. You are responsible for providing the documentation and arranging alternative plans.

Academic dishonesty is not tolerated. I will deal with it, should it occur, in the swiftest possible manner allowed by University regulations. UConn provides definitions and examples of plagiarism, the judicial process, and your rights. I strongly recommend that you review this information.

See: <http://lib.uconn.edu/help/writing/plagiarism-resources/>
<https://uconn.libwizard.com/f/plagiarism>

For discrimination and sexual harassment policies,

See: <http://policy.uconn.edu/?p=2884>
<http://sexualviolence.uconn.edu/>

Finally, we are here to facilitate your learning. I encourage you to take advantage of the course by keeping up with the readings, visiting the web site, thinking about the material, and discussing it in class, with me, with the TA, and with your colleagues.

Course Outline

Week 1	Introduction <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Downs, Chapter 1.
I. The Economics of Politics	
Week 2	Economic Models of Democratic Politics. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Downs, Chapter 1, cont.• Downs, Chapter 2.
Week 3	Economic Models of Democratic Politics. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Downs, Chapter 3.• Downs, Chapter 4.
Week 4	Economic Models of Democratic Politics. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Downs, Chapter 5.• Downs, Chapter 6.• Downs, Chapter 7.
Week 5	Economic Models of Democratic Politics. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Downs, Chapter 8.
Week 6	Economic Models of Democratic Politics. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Downs, Chapter 10.
Week 7	Economic Models of Democratic Politics. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Downs, Chapter 11.• Downs, Chapter 12.• Downs, Chapter 13.• Downs, Chapter 14.• Downs, Chapter 15.• Downs, Chapter 16.
Week 8	The Political Economy of Interest Groups. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Madison, Federalist Paper, no. 10. Posted online.• Olson, <i>Theory of Collective Action</i>: Introduction. Posted online.• Olson, <i>Theory of Collective Action</i>: Chapter 1. Posted online.• Baron, <i>Business and Its Environment</i>: “Political Theory and Government Institutions.” Posted online.• Baron, <i>Business and Its Environment</i>: “Political Analysis for Business.” Posted online. <p>March 9 <i>Downs Analytic Outline due.</i> March 11 First Exam: Essay prompt released.</p>
Week 9	Spring Break

Week 10 The Political Economy of Interest Groups.
March 23 ***Olson Analytic Outline due.***
March 25 Review for First Exam.
March 27 ***First Exam: MCs – in class portion.***

II. The Politics of Economics

Week 11 Politics and Economic Policy in the United States
 • Gosling and Eisner, Chapter 1.
 • Gosling and Eisner, Chapter 2.
 • TBA.
March 30 ***First Exam: Essay due.***

Week 12 Politics and Economic Policy in the United States
 • Gosling and Eisner, Chapter 3.
 • Gosling and Eisner, Chapter 4.
 • Gosling and Eisner, Chapter 5.
 • TBA.
April 8 **Second Exam: Essay prompt released.**

Week 13 Politics and Economic Policy in the United States
 • Gosling and Eisner, Chapter 6.
 • Gosling and Eisner, Chapter 7.
 • TBA.

Week 14 Politics and Economic Policy in the United States
 • Gosling and Eisner, Chapter 8.
 • Gosling and Eisner, Chapter 9.
 • Gosling and Eisner, Chapter 10.
 • TBA.

III. The Practical and Philosophical Questions

Week 15 Capitalism and Democracy
 • Almond, “Capitalism and Democracy.” Posted online.
 • Lindblom, “The Market as Prison.” Posted online.

May F.E.D. ***Second Exam: MCs – in class portion.***
 Second Exam: Essay due.