

**GOVT 421: American Political Economy**  
MW 1:15-2:30 pm Kirby Hall of Civil Rights 206  
Spring 2020

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### **Why study American political economy?**

States and markets are inextricably linked. The decisions of policymakers, both past and present, dramatically influence the structure and function of the U.S. economy and the economic security of ordinary Americans. But this influence goes both ways, with market actors, economic developments, and class identities affecting the political process as well. The results of this reciprocal relationship between political and economic forces touch nearly every aspect of our lives as both citizens and consumers, making it essential to understand the formation and function of the U.S. political economy.

### **What will I learn in this course?**

Political economy can mean many different things. In some courses, political economy refers to the application of econometric tools to the study of politics. That is not the case here. In this course, political economy refers more broadly to the relationship between political and economic institutions and actors. To that end we will examine both the political development and function of the U.S. political economy. We will begin by exploring major theories of state and market relationships in the United States, paying particular attention to the distinct approaches political scientists employ to explain economic policy outcomes. Next, we will consider how political institutions and policies have shaped U.S. economic arrangements from the founding to the present. We will investigate key moments in political-economic development including slavery, sectionalism, agrarian populism, the Gilded Age, the Progressive Era, the Great Depression and New Deal, war mobilization, post-war consumption, the War on Poverty, deregulation, and the recent financial crisis. After completing our historical turn, we will study in greater depth two aspects of U.S. political economy selected by the class.

Beyond its substantive focus, this course will also help you cultivate the skills necessary to design an original research project on an issue related to political economy. You will practice developing research questions, identifying and defining relevant variables, specifying a falsifiable theoretical model and hypotheses, and proposing an appropriate qualitative or quantitative identification strategy to test your model. This process will culminate with the creation and presentation of a mock National Science Foundation grant proposal.

With these twin goals in mind, class meetings and writing assignments will encourage you to analyze the substantive concepts we discuss while developing strategies with which to study them.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Student work in this course is in full compliance with the federal definition of a four credit hour course. Please see the Registrar's Office web site (<http://registrar.lafayette.edu/files/2013/04/Federal-Credit-Hour-Policy-Web-Statement.doc>) for the full policy and practice statement.

At the end of the course, you should be able to:

- *Describe* major theories of the state's approach to market regulation
- *Understand* and *evaluate* behavioral and institutional explanations for political economy
- *Discuss* significant moments in the political development of the U.S. economy over time, and *analyze* how different political factors shaped these episodes
- *Evaluate* how this process of development influences current issues of political economy
- *Understand* strategies for developing original research, and *apply* them to the creation of an original research design on a topic related to U.S. political economy that would be appropriate for a graduate-level research project
- *Critique* the research designs employed by other scholars and students on topics of political economy

### **What will I be expected to do in this course?**

My expectations are that you will:

1. *Attend Class*: Attendance is vital to learning the material presented in this course and to facilitating the research and writing process, and as such it is required. If you miss more than 10% (3) of this semester's classes, you will not be eligible for a final grade of A, regardless of your other assignment grades. If you miss more than 20% (6) of this semester's classes, you will not be eligible for a final grade above a B-, regardless of your other assignment grades. Missing more than 30% (9) of the classes will result in a failing grade for the course. If an extraordinary circumstance arises that puts your ability to fulfill the attendance requirements in jeopardy, please discuss it with me immediately.
2. *Read and Take Notes*: The readings for this course will be extensive, and they will address both the subject matter and the research process. I expect you to consider the readings carefully and be prepared to discuss them thoroughly in class. Specifically, I'd like you to pay attention to two related sets of questions as you read:
  - a. What outcome is the author trying to explain, and what do they argue is responsible for that outcome?
  - b. What data do they use and what types of actors do they focus on in their analysis (e.g., interest groups, institutions, individual voters, etc.)?

I expect you to complete all assigned reading before class on the day for which it is assigned, and I suggest reading them in order. Please bring your readings and notes with you to class so you can refer to them. The course readings are all available on Moodle. You do not need to purchase any books for this course.

3. *Participate Actively*: This is a seminar. Class participation will play an important role in exploring and understanding the material presented and in assisting with the research process. You will be the primary drivers of discussion in this course. You will also play a key role in helping your peers develop their research designs through in-class research workshops. Please come to class prepared to engage thoughtfully, listen attentively, and interact with your peers respectfully. If you find participating in class difficult for any reason, please speak with me so that we can discuss strategies for increasing your participation. Participation will account for 15% of your course grade.

4. *Be a Good Citizen:* In every community, no matter how big or small, we have expectations about how other members will act towards one another. In this class, I expect you to be a good citizen by contributing positively to the learning environment in two important ways:
  - a. Be respectful of the opinions and skills of your fellow classmates. Politics can be a divisive topic, but differences in opinion and background provide an opportunity for intellectual growth. Lafayette is committed to creating a community that is inclusive of diversity in its many manifestations, including race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, disability, place of origin, and political affiliation. We all stand to benefit from being aware of and welcoming these differences. While disagreements are welcome, disrespectful behavior will not be tolerated.
  - b. Don't distract your fellow students from class discussion by arriving late or attending to business unrelated to the coursework. This includes using technology for tasks beyond the scope of the class. Technology has revolutionized the way we work, but it can also be distracting in a classroom—and particularly in a seminar setting. Laptops/tablets will be restricted to research design workshops, and cell phones are prohibited. Please talk to me if this presents a problem.
5. *Demonstrate Academic Integrity:* To maintain the scholarly standards of the College and, equally important, the personal ethical standards of Lafayette students, I expect that your written assignments, examinations, and class participation represent your own work. As per the college's policy, if you commit academic dishonesty, you are subject to a range of penalties, including suspension or expulsion. The underlying principle is one of intellectual honesty. If a person is to have self-respect and the respect of others, all work must be his/her own.

#### **How will my performance be assessed?**

Your ability to understand and critique the course material and to use that material to generate original research will be assessed with three main sets of graded assignments throughout the semester. As per the requirements for a writing intensive course, several of your writing assignments will go through stages of development including outlining, drafting, peer review, and revision. The following descriptions provide a brief overview:

1. *Reading Responses (15% - 5% per response):* You will select three class periods to respond to the week's readings in a short (~2 page) memo. Your response should compare and critique the readings, making note of any questions or disagreements you have with the authors' arguments. You will also identify a news article for a current issue in political economy that you think relates to the readings. The goal of these responses is to ensure your understanding of the material, give you an opportunity to apply it to a relevant issue, and to develop your ability to analyze and critique social science research more broadly.
2. *Research Design Memos (30% - 5%/10% per memo):* These assignments will help you to develop your final research project for the course. For each topic—identifying a research question, conducting a literature review, developing a theory and hypothesis, and proposing a research method—you will write a memo detailing your approach. You will be assigned to a small research group with whom you will workshop in class each of these pieces as they are completed. The goal of these memos is twofold: first, they will help you apply the techniques of good research design to your own topic of interest, and second, they will give you an opportunity to learn to critique the research of your peers. You will draw on these memos as you write your final research proposal.
3. *NSF Research Proposal (30%):* The capstone project for this course is the preparation of a mock National Science Foundation grant proposal. This proposal, 15 to 20 double-spaced pages, will mirror the format required for NSF doctoral dissertation grants for political science. You will choose an original research topic, and your proposal will detail the research question, existing literature, your alternative explanation,

and proposed research design to test that explanation. The goal of this proposal is for you to develop your ability to design an original research project of the type that a policy researcher or graduate student might prepare. In addition to the research design memos, which will aid you in this endeavor, your NSF proposal will be completed in stages:

- a. *Annotated outline*: You will submit a draft annotated outline for your project detailing the organization of the project and including notes for each section.
  - b. *Introduction and Rough Draft*: You will submit a full rough draft of the proposal, revised based on the peer review of your original outline draft.
4. *NSF Research Proposal Presentation (10%)*: This assignment will ask you to present, with slides, your research proposal. The goal of this presentation is for you to practice your ability to successfully communicate your research orally. The presentation will also give you another opportunity for feedback on your research design from your fellow students before submitting your final NSF proposal draft.

A calendar of the assignments is as follows:

Assignment		Due Date	% of Final Grade
Reading Responses:	3 Responses	Day of Assigned Readings	15%
Research Design Memos:	Research Topic	Wed. Feb. 12	-
	Puzzle	Wed. Feb. 19	5%
	Literature Review	Wed. Mar. 4	10%
	Theory and Hypothesis	Wed. Mar. 25	10%
	Research Design	Mon. Apr. 13	5%
Research Presentation:	Slides + Presentation	May 4 & 6	10%
NSF Grant Proposal:	Annotated Outline	Wed. Apr. 22	
	Intro + Rough Draft	Wed. Apr. 29	
	Final Draft	Wed. May 13	30%
Class Participation:			15%

Unless otherwise notified in advance, a hard copy of all assignments should be handed in at the beginning of class on the day they are due. **If I ask you to submit an assignment electronically, please do so in either Microsoft Word or PDF format, not a Google document. Do not consider an emailed assignment turned in until you have received confirmation from me.** In order to facilitate peer editing and review in our research workshop groups, as well as to learn from and about each other's academic interests, writing styles, and techniques more generally, all writing assignments done for this class may be shared with and read by all members of the class.

While the grades for each assignment will reflect the final draft, failure to submit any of the preparatory writing assignments (e.g., outlines, drafts, peer reviews, etc.) will result in the assignment grade being docked one full letter for each piece of preparatory writing that was not submitted in a timely manner. Late final drafts will be docked one-third of a letter grade for each day after the due date they are turned in, and no late work will be accepted after one week. If you feel that you will not be able to submit an assignment on time due to illness, emergency, or another serious conflict, please let me know as early as possible. I am happy to work with you to make reasonable accommodations when necessary, as long as you notify me before the assignment is due.

## What can I expect from the professor in this course?

Beyond guiding this seminar, here are the things you can expect from me this semester:

1. *Give You Opportunity for Input:* You can expect that I will give you the chance to help shape this course in several different ways:
  - a. I will always try to provide an element of choice on the assignments so that you can pick the topics that most interest you within the bounds of a particular task. This will also include choosing the substantive material for two weeks of the course.
  - b. I will not make any significant changes to the course policies, requirements, or deadlines without the support of a majority of the students engaged in the course.
2. *Be Accessible:* You can expect me to provide plenty of opportunities outside of class for you to get in touch with me. I will hold office hours every Monday and Wednesday from 2:30 to 4 pm and by appointment, and I strongly encourage you to attend them. **It is common for students to come to office hours to discuss each research design memo.** If the class would benefit from additional office hours before major assignment due dates, I will schedule those. Office hours give you a one-on-one opportunity to check in about concepts you are struggling with; discuss your research project; tell me how the course is going for you; talk about related internship, work, or research questions; or to talk about something else going on in the world.

You can also expect me to respond to emails within 48 hours during the workweek, but only during normal work hours. Please feel free to email me with quick questions or to set up a meeting. Longer discussions and **all discussions about grades must take place in person.**

3. *Provide Timely Feedback:* Since I expect you to submit assignments on time, you can expect me to return your assignments with useful feedback in a timely manner. With the exception of the assignments submitted during exam week or over holidays, I will return all graded assignments to you no more than three class periods after you have submitted them unless an emergency prevents me from doing so.

## Are there any other resources that might help me in this course?

Lafayette has several resources designed to support your academic pursuits throughout your time at Lafayette, and I encourage you to take advantage of them. These aren't just resources for students who are "struggling" — studies conducted at several universities find that students who take advantage of academic support services like these perform better both in and out of the classroom.

1. *Student Accessibility Services:* Lafayette is committed to ensuring that all students can fully participate in all programs and activities at the college. In compliance with Lafayette College policy and equal access laws, I am available to discuss appropriate academic accommodations that you may require as a student with accessibility concerns. Requests for academic accommodations need to be made during the first two weeks of the semester, except for unusual circumstances, so arrangements can be made. Students must register with the Office of the Dean of the College for verification and for determination of reasonable academic accommodations. Students may contact Accessibility Services through the Academic Resources Hub. You can find more information online at <https://hub.lafayette.edu/disability-services/>.
2. *Academic Resources Hub:* Lafayette offers several programs to help students make the most of their academic experience. The Peer Tutoring Program provides students with course-specific help. The Academic Counseling program provides both individual and group sessions to help students improve their general academic skills. More information for these programs can be found at <https://hub.lafayette.edu/>.

3. *College Writing Program*: The College Writing Program holds drop-in hours Sunday through Thursday from 4-7 pm (Pardee 319) and 7-10 pm (Skillman 105). Staffed by Writing Associates (WAs), drop-in hours are open to all Lafayette College students. WAs can provide feedback on all types of writing and at any stage of the writing process. Individual conferences last approximately 30 minutes. No appointment is necessary. More information can be found at <http://cwp.lafayette.edu/for-students/>.
4. *Librarians*: Ana Ramirez Luhrs is the Kirby Librarian, and she is an excellent resource for research assistance for your group reform memo. Her office is in the Kirby Library.

### Course Schedule

Week	Readings	Assignments
<b>Part I: Understanding Political Economy</b>		
<b>1: Political Economy in Action</b> Jan. 27 & 29	<b>M:</b> Intro  <b>W:</b> Marc Allen Eisner, 2011, <i>The American Political Economy</i> , pgs. 22-32 (3-8), 45-72 (15-30) Lehigh Valley PBS, 2008, <i>Bethlehem Steel: the People who Built America</i> , available from <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2QTGiHOZZFU">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2QTGiHOZZFU</a> Andrew Seidman & Jonathan Lai, 2019, "If Trump's 2020 path runs through Pa., Northampton County is a place to watch," <i>The Philadelphia Inquirer</i>	
<b>2: States, Markets, and Democracy</b> Feb. 3 & 5	<b>M:</b> Fred Block, 2001, "Introduction" to Karl Polanyi's <i>The Great Transformation</i> [1944], pg. xviii-xxi, xxiii-xxix Charles Lindblom, 1982, "The Market as Prison," <i>The Journal of Politics</i> David Vogel, 1978, "Why Businessmen Distrust Their State: The Political Consciousness of American Corporate Executives," <i>British Journal of Political Science</i>  <b>W:</b> William Novak, 2008, "The Myth of the 'Weak' American State," <i>The American Historical Review</i> , pgs. 752-761 Monica Prasad, 2012, <i>The Land of Too Much</i> , Ch. 1 "The Farmer's Tour" Suzanne Mettler, 2018, <i>The Government-Citizen Disconnect</i> , Ch. 1 "A Time of Contradiction"	
<b>3: Models of Political Economy</b> Feb. 10 & 12	<b>M:</b> Richard Wolf & Stephen Resnick, 2012, <i>Contending Economic Theories: Neoclassical, Keynesian, and Marxian</i> , Ch. 1 "Three Different Theories" Chris Howard, 2017, <i>Thinking Like a Political Scientist</i> , pg. vii-viii, 13-14, 25-29 Sample NSF Proposal  <b>W:</b> Gosta Esping-Anderson, 1990, <i>Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism</i> , Ch. 1 "The Three Political Economies of the Welfare State" Theda Skocpol, "State Formation and Social Policy in the United States," <i>American Behavioral Scientist</i>	<b>W:</b> Research Topic

<b>4: Theories of Political Power</b> Feb. 17 & 19	<p><b>M:</b> Martin Gilens &amp; Benjamin Page, 2014, "Testing Theories of American Politics: Elites, Interest Groups, and Average Citizens," <i>Perspectives on Politics</i></p> <p>Paul Pierson, 1993, "When Effect Becomes Cause: Policy Feedback and Political Change," <i>World Politics</i></p> <p><b>W:</b> Howard, 2017, <i>Thinking Like a Political Scientist</i>, pg. 15-25, 29-34 and Ch. 2 "What Happened?"</p>	<b>W:</b> Puzzle Memo
<b>Part II: Development of the U.S. Political Economy</b>		
<b>5: Revolution to Reconstruction</b> Feb. 24 & 26	<p><b>M:</b> Howard Zinn, 1980, <i>A People's History of the United States</i>, pg. 48-75 [skim], 90-102</p> <p>Charles Calomoris and Stephen Haber, 2014, <i>Fragile by Design</i>, pgs. 152-184</p> <p>T.H. Breen, 2004, <i>The Marketplace of Revolution: How Consumer Politics Shaped American Independence</i>, "Introduction"</p> <p><b>W:</b> Nikole Hannah-Jones w/Matthew Desmond, "The Economy that Slavery Built," <i>The New York Times 1619 Podcast</i> [listen to 25:50], available from <a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2019/08/30/podcasts/1619-slavery-cotton-capitalism.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2019/08/30/podcasts/1619-slavery-cotton-capitalism.html</a></p> <p>Mehrsa Baradaran, 2017, <i>The Color of Money: Black Banks and the Racial Wealth Gap</i>, Ch. 1 "Forty Acres or a Savings Bank"</p> <p>Avidit Acharya, Matthew Blackwell, &amp; Maya Sen, 2018, <i>Deep Roots: How Slavery Still Shapes Southern Politics</i>, Ch. 3 "How Slavery Predicts White Political Attitudes Today"</p>	
<b>6: Industrialization to the Progressive Era</b> Mar. 2 & 4	<p><b>M:</b> Eisner, 2011, <i>The American Political Economy</i>, "Ch. 3: The Progressive Regime and the Regulatory State"</p> <p>M. Elizabeth Sanders, 1999, <i>Roots of Reform</i>, Ch. 2 "Core and Periphery in the American Economy," 217-232 [Skim]</p> <p>Theda Skocpol, 1992, selection from <i>Protecting Soldiers and Mothers: The Political Origins of Social Policy in the United States</i> pgs. 1-11, 41-61</p> <p><b>W:</b> Thomas C. Leonard, 2005, "Eugenics and Economics in the Progressive Era," <i>Journal of Economic Perspectives</i></p> <p>Mae Ngai, 2005, <i>Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America</i>, pgs. 17-20</p> <p>Chris Messer, Thomas Shriver, &amp; Alison Adams, 2018, "The Destruction of Black Wall Street: Tulsa's 1921 Race Riot and the Eradication of Accumulated Wealth," <i>Journal of Economics and Sociology</i></p>	<b>W:</b> Lit Review Memo

<p><b>7: From Depression to New Deal</b> Mar. 9 &amp; 11</p>	<p><b>M:</b> Mallory SoRelle, FC, "Social Welfare Policy," <i>Oxford Handbook of the New Deal</i> Cybelle Fox, 2010, "Three Worlds of Relief: Race, Immigration, and Public and Private Social Welfare Spending in American Cities, 1929," <i>American Journal of Sociology</i> Julie Weise, 2019, <i>Shaped by the State</i>, Ch. 5 "La Revolución Institucional: The Rise and Fall of the Mexican New Deal in the U.S. South, 1920-1990"</p> <p><b>W:</b> Theda Skocpol &amp; Ken Feingold, 1982, "State Capacity and Economic Intervention in the Early New Deal," <i>Political Science Quarterly</i> Theda Skocpol &amp; Ken Feingold; Michael Goldfield, 1990, "Explaining New Deal Labor Policy," <i>American Political Science Review</i> Sarah Quinn, 2019, <i>American Bonds: How Credit Markets Shaped a Nation</i>, Ch. 7 "The Rise of Federal Credit Programs"</p>	
<p><b>8: Spring Break</b> Mar. 16 &amp; 18</p>	<p><b>**Spring Break: No Class**</b></p>	
<p><b>9: War, Post War, and the War on Poverty</b> Mar. 23 &amp; 25</p>	<p><b>M:</b> Ira Katznelson, 2013, <i>Fear Itself: The New Deal and the Origins of Our Time</i>, Ch. 10 "Public Procedures, Private Interests" Jill Quadagno, 1994, <i>The Color of Welfare</i>, Introduction "The Equal Opportunity Welfare State" and Ch. 2 "Fostering Political Participation" Brian Waddell, 1999, "Corporate Influence and World War II: Resolving the New Deal Political Stalemate," <i>Journal of Policy History</i></p> <p><b>W:</b> Alexis Walker, 2014, "Labor's Enduring Divide," <i>Studies in American Political Development</i> Lizabeth Cohen, 2003, <i>Consumers Republic</i>, Ch. 2 "War: Citizen Consumers Do Battle on the Home Front" Felicia Kornbluh, 1997, "To Fulfill their 'Rightly Needs': Consumerism and the National Welfare Rights Movement," <i>Radical History Review</i></p>	<p><b>W:</b> Theory &amp; Hypotheses Memo</p>
<p><b>10: Deregulation and Retrenchment</b> Mar. 30 &amp; Apr. 1</p>	<p><b>M:</b> Michael Pertschuk, 1982, <i>Revolt Against Regulation</i>, Ch. 2 "The New PACs Americana: Revitalization of Business Political Action" Monica Prasad, 2018, <i>Starving the Beast: Ronald Reagan and the Tax Cut Revolution</i>, pgs. 1-38 Jacob Hacker, 2019, <i>The Great Risk Shift 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition</i>, Ch. 2 "Risking It All"</p> <p><b>W:</b> Joe Soss, Richard Fording, &amp; Sanford Schram, 2011, selection from <i>Disciplining the Poor: Neoliberal Paternalism and the Persistent Power of Race</i></p>	



	Mallory SoRelle, 2020, <i>Democracy Declined: The Failed Politics of Consumer Financial Protection</i> , Ch. 5 “Democratization and Its Discontents: Demobilizing Marginalized Borrowers”	
<b>11: NSF Workshop</b> Apr. 6 & 8	<b>**Professor will be travelling for Western Political Science Associate Conference*</b>	
<b>12: Financial Crisis &amp; Recovery</b> Apr. 13 & 15	<p><b>M:</b> Financial Crisis Inquiry Commission, 2011, “Conclusions of the FCIC,” <i>The Financial Crisis Inquiry Report</i> Monica Prasad, 2012, selection from <i>Land of Too Much</i> Patricia Posey w/Michael Dawson, 2019, “The Poor Pay More,” <i>New Dawn Podcast</i>, available from <a href="https://www.raceandcapitalism.com/season-four/s4e5-the-poor-pay-more">https://www.raceandcapitalism.com/season-four/s4e5-the-poor-pay-more</a></p> <p><b>W:</b> Alex Hertel-Fernandez, 2018, <i>Politics at Work</i>, pgs. 1-10, 101-136. Nick Carnes, 2012, “Does the Numerical Underrepresentation of the Working Class in Congress Matter?” <i>Legislative Studies Quarterly</i> Ashley Jardina, 2019, <i>White Identity Politics</i>, pgs. 1-9, 187-215</p>	<b>M:</b> Research Design Memo
<b>Part III: Current Issues in Political Economy</b>		
<b>13: Special Topics 1</b> Apr. 20 & 22	TBD	<b>W:</b> Annotated Outline
<b>14: Special Topics 2</b> Apr. 27 & 29	TBD	<b>W:</b> Introduction & Draft
<b>15: Presentations</b> May 4 & 6		<b>M &amp; W:</b> Presentations

**Final NSF Proposal Due During Exam Week on Wednesday May 13**