Topics in the Economics of Politics

Objective

This course covers selected topics in political economy. I focus on non-democracies, as opposed to voting and tax/public policy literature developed for democracies. However, we discuss agency issues such as accountability, expertise, transparency, etc. that are among the shared features of both democratic and non-democratic systems.

This is a mix-and-match course, designed to help you find research topics that interests you. Therefore, we touch on a lot of topics, but tend not to dive too deep in a single one. As such, the course is most appropriate for two groups: (1) those who have the basic knowledge of game theory, but have not completely settled on a research topic; (2) those who are interested to be familiarized with a wide range of modeling techniques.

Assignments and Exams

I divide the class into groups. Each group is collectively responsible for each assignment, and all the members receive the same grade. There are three types of assignments: presentations, research proposals, and homeworks. All presentations, research proposals, and homeworks must be submitted in LaTex.

Presentations (40): Most weeks, one group presents one paper, and I discuss another. When a group is presenting, the other group(s) and I can ask questions from all members of the presenting group. That is, all the members of the presenting group are responsible to know the details of the paper. Remember, I give the grade to the group as a whole. The papers that you are presenting have "***" next to them.

Research proposals (30): Each group has to turn in 3 research proposals. Each research proposal is 3 pages. The first page includes motivation and literature review, then comes the main text. The last page is only for references. Proposals must be polished.

Homeworks (30): Occasionally, I give one question for your homework. Probably, 5 to 8 times during the semester. Questions are directly related to the papers of the week.

Exams (Fail and Pass): I give an exam at the end of our discussion of global games; most likely, in the 10th session. This is the only exam, and it is an in-class, closed-book exam. You must do more than 50 per cent in order to pass this course. If you receive less than 50 per cent in the exam, you will have another chance to take another exam in a week. It is not a hard exam, and designed to indicates that you understand the basics.
I. Global Games, Coordination, and Collective Action

Session 0-1


Session 2


Session 3


Session 4


Session 5

Bueno de Mesquita, Ethan. 2010. “Regime Change and Revolutionary Entrepreneurs.” American Political Science Review 104: 446-66.***

Session 6


Session 7

Session 8


Session 9


Assignment I: Solve question 1.

Session 10

Exam.

II. Dictatorships

Session 1


Session 2

Dunning, Thad. Crude Democracy: Natural Resource Wealth and Political Regimes. Cambridge University Press. *** (Present the formal model.)

Session 3

Ticchi Davide, and Andrea Vindigni “War and Endogenous Democracy.” Mimeo.

Session 4


Assignment II: One group presents the paper, the other group turns in the dynamic version.
III. Agency: Accountability, Expertise, and Leadership

Session 1


Session 2


Session 3


Session 4


Session 5

Session 6


Session 7


Session 8


Session 9


Assignment IV: Write a research proposal on topic III.

IV. Conflict and Bargaining

Session 1


Assignment V: Prove that $P_i$ satisfies deluded-ness, know what you know, and know what you don’t know if and only if $P_i$ is partitional.

Session 2

Session 3


Session 4


[**Assignment VI:**] Write a research proposal on topic IV OR IF YOU WANT, write a research proposal on the following topic Extra below.

THE END OF COVERED MATERIAL.
Extra. Economics of Law

Session 1


Session 2


Session 3


Session 4

Borgers, Tilman. 2004. “Costly Voting.” *American Economic Review*, 94(1): 57-66. (This paper is here for its modeling perspective, not the topic per se.)

Session 5


Session 6