
PLSC 22800 Political Economy of Elections
Spring 2008
Cobb 219, Tue 1:30 - 4:20 PM

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Course Outline

This course investigates how the economy and elections interact with each other in theory and practice. The course begins by asking two central questions – how elections affect the economy and how the economy affects election outcomes – in light of a political economy perspective. Students learn how economic conditions affect voters' choices in elections and how the expectations of these effects lead politicians to certain policy choices. This course further explores how different electoral institutions shape different economic outcomes by looking at their differential effects on the choices of voters, politicians, and economic actors.

Each week, two to three students will be responsible for leading discussion on the readings. These students should meet me one week before class to discuss the readings. All students are expected to read required readings before class. After the discussion, these discussants should turn in a brief review (four pages at maximum) of required readings by the end of the week.

Grade Policy

30% Discussion leadership and a short review
10% Class participation
60% Final take home. Students can write a research paper with permission.

A Book to Buy

- Alberto Alesina, Nouriel Roubini, and Gerald D. Cohen. *Political Cycles and the Macroeconomy* (1999), The MIT Press.

Course Plan

1. Introduction (April 1)

2. Overview (April 8)

- Michael Lewis-Beck and Mary Stegmaier. “Economic Determinants of Electoral Outcomes.” *Annual Review of Political Science* Vol.3. (2000), pp. 183-219.
- Allan Drazen. “The Political Business Cycle after 25 Years,” “Comments” by Alberto Alesina, Carl E. Wash, and “Discussion” by Allan Drazen. *NBER Macroeconomics Annual*, Vol. 15. (2000), pp. 75-137.

3. Economic Voting (April 15)

- Morris Fiorina. Ch. 1 and 5 in *Retrospective voting in American national elections* (1981) Yale University Press.
- Michael Lewis-Beck “Comparative Economic Voting: Britain, France, Germany, Italy” *American Journal of Political Science* 1986 30: 315-46.
- D. Roderick Kiewiet and Douglas Rivers. “A Retrospective on Retrospective Voting” *Political Behavior*, Vol. 6, No. 4. (1984), pp. 369-393.

Recommended

- John Ferejohn. “Incumbent Performance and Electoral Control.” *Public Choice*. 50, (1986), pp. 5-25.
- John Ferejohn. “Accountability and Authority: Toward a Theory of Political Accountability,” *Democracy, Accountability, and Representation*, 1999, Cambridge University Press.
- James Fearon. “Electoral Accountability and the Control of Politicians: Selecting Good Types versus Sanctioning Poor Performance,” *Democracy, Accountability, and Representation*, 1999, Cambridge University Press.

4. Economic Voting and Political Institutions (April 22)

- G. Bingham Powell, Jr. Constitutional Design and Citizen Electoral Control. *Journal of Theoretical Politics*, Vol. 1, No. 2, 107-130 (1989)
- G. Bingham Powell, Jr. and Guy D. Whitten “A Cross-National Analysis of Economic Voting: Taking Account of the Political Context” *American Journal of Political Science* May 1993 37(2): 391-414.
- Alexander Pacek and Benjamin Radcliff “The Political Economy of Competitive Elections in the Developing World” *American Journal of Political Science* August 1995 39(3): 745-759.

5. Political Business Cycle 1 (April 29)

- Burton A. Abrams. “How Richard Nixon Pressured Arthur Burns: Evidence from the Nixon Tapes,” *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 2006 20(4): 177-188.
- Alberto Alesina, Nouriel Roubini, and Gerald D. Cohen. Ch. 2, 3, and 5. in *Political Cycles and the Macroeconomy* (1999), The MIT Press.

Recommended

- Alberto Alesina. 1987. "Macroeconomic policy in a two-party system as a repeated game." *Quarterly Journal Economics* 102:651-78
- Alberto Alesina. 1988. "Macroeconomics and politics." NBER Macroeconomics Annual 3:13-61
- Alberto Alesina, Gerald D. Cohen, Nouriel Roubini. 1992. "Macroeconomic policies and elections in OECD democracies." *Economics & Politics* 4(1):1-30
- Alberto Alesina, Gerald D. Cohen and Nouriel Roubini. 1993. "Electoral business cycles in industrial democracies." *European Journal Political Economy* 23:1-25
- Alberto Alesina, John Londregan, and Howard Rosenthal. 1993. "A Model of the Political Economy of the US." *American Political Science Review* 87(1):12-33
- Alberto Alesina and Howard Rosenthal. 1995. *Partisan Politics, Divided Government, and the Economy*. Cambridge University Press.
- Alberto Alesina and Nouriel Roubini. 1992. "Political Cycles in OECD Economies." *Review Economy Studies* 59:663-88
- Alberto Alesina and Jeffrey Sachs. "Political Parties and the Business Cycle in the United States, 1948-1984," *Journal of Money, Credit and Banking*, Vol. 20, No. 1. (Feb., 1988), pp. 63-82.
- Douglas Hibbs. "Political Parties and Macroeconomic Policy." *American Political Science Review*. 71 (1977) pp.1467-1487.
- William D. Nordhaus. "The Political Business Cycle." *The Review of Economic Studies*, Vol. 42, No. 2. (Apr., 1975), pp. 169-190.
- Michael W. Klein. "Timing Is All: Elections and the Duration of the United States Business Cycles." *Journal of Money, Credit and Banking* 28 (1996) pp. 84-101.
- Daniel Treisman and Vladimir Gimpelson. "Political Business Cycles and Russian Elections, or the Manipulations of 'Chudar'" *British Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 31, No. 2. (Apr., 2001), pp. 225-246.
- Kenneth N. Bickers and Robert M. Stein. "The Electoral Dynamics of the Federal Pork Barrel" *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 40, No. 4. (Nov., 1996), pp. 1300-1326.
- Kenneth A. Schultz (1995). "The Politics of the Political Business Cycle," *British Journal of Political Science*, 25 (1): 79-99.

6. Political Business Cycle 2 (May 6)

- Alberto Alesina, Nouriel Roubini, and Gerald D. Cohen. Ch. 4. in *Political Cycles and the Macroeconomy*, 1999, The MIT Press.
- Alberto Alesina and Howard Rosenthal. "Partisan Cycles in Congressional Elections and the Macroeconomy." *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 83, No. 2. (Jun., 1989), pp. 373-398.
- Walter R. Mebane, Jr. and Jasjeet S. Sekhon. "Coordination and Policy Moderation at Midterm." *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 96, No. 1. (Mar., 2002), pp. 141-157.

Recommended

- Edward R. Tufte. Determinants of the Outcomes of Midterm Congressional Elections. *American Political Science Review* 69, 3 (1975): 812-26.
- Matthew Soberg Shugart. "The Electoral Cycle and Institutional Sources of Divided Presidential Government," *American Political Science Review*, 89, 2 (June 1995): 327-43.

7. Income and Voting (May 13)

- Douglas A. Hibbs Jr. "Bread and Peace Voting in U.S. Presidential Elections." *Public Choice*, 2000, 104: 149-180.
- Andrew Gelman, Boris Shor, Joseph Bafumi, David Park. 2007. "Rich State, Poor State, Red State, Blue State: What's the Matter with Connecticut?" *Quarterly Journal of Political Science* 2007 2: 345-367.
- Larry M. Bartels. "Partisan Politics and the U.S. Income Distribution." 2007. Unpublished Manuscript.

Recommended

- Larry M. Bartels. "What's the Matter with *What's the Matter with Kansas*" *Quarterly Journal of Political Science*, 1 (2006): 201-226.
- Douglas A. Hibbs Jr. "The Economy, the War in Iraq and the 2004 Presidential Election," 2000, Unpublished.

8. Political Election Cycles in Parliamentary Systems (May 20)

- Alastair Smith. 2003. "Election Timing in Majoritarian Parliaments." *British Journal of Political Science* 33: 397-418.
- Kaare Strom, Stephen M. Swindle. "Strategic Parliamentary Dissolution" *American Political Science Review* Vol. 96, No. 3 (Sep., 2002), pp. 575-591
- Abdur R. Chowdhury. "Political Surfing over Economic Waves: Parliamentary Election Timing in India." *American Journal of Political Science* Vol. 37, No. 4 (Nov., 1993), pp. 1100-1118

9. Elections and Policy Switches (May 27)

- Susan Stokes "What Do Policy Switches Tell Us About Democracy," *Democracy, Accountability, and Representation*, 1999, Cambridge University Press.
- Gregg B. Johnson and Brian F. Crisp. 2003. "Mandates, Powers, and Policies." *American Journal of Political Science* 47(1): 127-141.
- Brandice Canes-Wrone, Michael C. Herron and Kenneth W. Shotts, "Leadership and Pandering: A Theory of Executive Policymaking," *American Journal of Political Science*, 2001, 45(3): 532-550.
- David S. Lee, Enrico Moretti, and Matthew J. Butler, "Do Voters Affect Or Elect Policies? Evidence From The U. S. House," *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 2004, 119(3): 807-859.

Recommended

- Susan Stokes (2001). *Mandates and Democracy: Neoliberalism by Surprise in Latin America*. Cambridge University Press.

10. Corruption (June 3)

- Alcia Adser, Carles Boix, and Mark Payne. "Are You Being Served? Political Accountability and Quality of Government," *Journal of Law, Economics, and Organization*, 2003, Vol. 19, No.2. 445-490.
- Margit Tavits. "Clarity of Responsibility and Corruption." *American Journal of Political Science* Vol. 51, No. 1 (Jan., 2007), pp. 218-229.
- Gabreilla R. Montinola and Robert W. Jackman. "Sources of Corruption: A Cross-Country Study" *British Journal of Political Science* 32: 147170

11. Take Home Due (June 9)