

Comparative Political Institutions and Institutional Development

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Course Description

This course presents a broad in-depth overview of the state of the art in comparative politics, with special attention to institutions. The focus is on themes, not on specific geographic areas. The course materials combine some more dated classics and recent and provocative contributions, with a preference for articles that can provide evidence of causal relationships. The course is organized in sections, each of them containing several lectures. Each lecture revolves around one or two papers, which are going to be dissected in detail, in order to understand the mechanics and the logic of the model (for theoretical contributions) and the data and empirical strategy (for empirical contributions). In order to fully understand the lectures, and to productively contribute to class discussion, students are encouraged to read the assigned materials before the class meeting in which they are going to be presented and discussed.

Honor Code

Università Bocconi conceives of education as an ongoing process that stretches across a person's entire professional life. The University hopes that the entire Bocconi community will respect the values of fairness and correctness associated with it, values which inspire and guide the conduct of all community members as they pursue common objectives and a shared mission. The Università Bocconi Honor Code is published at <http://www.unibocconi.eu/honorcode>. We encourage all students to read it. We remind you that improper use of the "Attendance" recording procedure by students will result in sanctions in compliance with the Bocconi Honor Code.

Evaluation

There is a first mid-term exam, covering the first half of the course, and a second midterm exam, covering only the second half of the course. Each of the partial exams is worth 50. For those unable or unwilling to take the midterm exam, the midterm and the non-cumulative final exam are replaced by a final exam (worth 100% of the grade) covering the entire course content. Students who have NOT passed the exam yet for the previous year have to prepare the current program. For information please contact prof. Chiopris.

Plan of the Course

Dates

1. Oct 25 : Introduction
2. Oct 27: The Origins of the State
3. Nov 3: The Origins of Institutions
4. Nov 8: Institutions & State Capacity
5. Nov 10: The Origins of Democracy
6. Nov 15: Institutions and Growth - Democracies
7. Nov 17: Institutions and Growth - Non-Democracies
8. Nov 22: Authoritarian Regimes
9. Nov 24: Regime Survival and Repression
10. Nov 29: Democratic Backsliding
11. Dec 1: Lobbies and Mafias

Readings

1. Oct 25 : Introduction

- What is the state? What is democracy? Roughly following:
- David Stasavage, “Representation and Consent: Why They Arose in Europe and Not Elsewhere,” *Annual Review of Political Science*, 19 (2016): pages 145 -162
- Alberto Alesina and Paola Giuliano, “Culture and Institutions,” *Journal of Economic Literature* 53 (2016): 898-944.

2. Oct 27: The Origins of the State

- Olson, Mancur. 1993. “Dictatorship, Democracy, and Development.” *American Political Science Review* 87 (03): 567-576.
- Sanchez de la Sierra, Raul. 2020. “On The Origins of The State: Stationary Bandits And Taxation in Eastern Congo.”

3. Nov 3: The Origins of Institutions

- North, D. C., & Weingast, B. R. (1989). Constitutions and commitment: the evolution of institutions governing public choice in seventeenth-century England. *The journal of economic history*, 49(4), 803-832.
- Avner Greif and Christopher Kingston, “Institutions: Rules or Equilibria?” in Gonzalo Caballero and Norman Schofield, eds. *Political Economy of Institutions, Democracy and Voting*. Springer, 2011: Pp. 13-43.

4. Nov 8: Institutions & State Capacity

- Besley and Persson, “The Origins of State Capacity: Property Rights, Taxation and Politics”, *AER*, 2009

5. Nov 10: The Origins of Democracy

- Boix, Carles. 2003. “A Theory of Political Transitions”, chapter 1 in *Democracy and Redistribution*.
- Ben Ansell and David Samuels, 2010. “Inequality and Democratization: A Contractarian Approach.” *Comparative Political Studies*.

6. Nov 15: Institutions and Growth: Democracies

- Ahlquist, John S, and Erik Wibbels. 2012. “Riding the Wave: World Trade and Factor-Based Models of Democratization.” *American Journal of Political Science* 56 (2): 447–64.
- Wittman, Donald. 1989. “Why Democracies Produce Efficient Results.”
- Przeworski, Adam, and Fernando Limongi. 1993. “Political Regimes and Economic Growth.” *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 7 (3): 1–20. *Journal of Political Economy* 97 (6): 1–31.

7. Nov 17: Institutions and Growth: Non-Democracies

- Besley, Timothy, and Masayuki Kudamatsu. 2008. “Making Autocracy Work.” In *Institutions and Economic Performance*, edited by Elhanan Helpman, 1–75. Harvard University Press
- Yang et al., AI-tocracy, working paper.
- Wintrobe, Ronald. 2014. “The Tinpot and the Totalitarian: an Economic Theory of Dictatorship.” *American Political Science Review* 84 (3): 849–72.

8. Nov 22: Authoritarian Regimes

- Svobik, Milan W. 2009. “Power Sharing and Leadership Dynamics in Authoritarian Regimes.” *American Journal of Political Science* 53 (2): 477–94.
- Gehlbach, Scott, Konstantin Sonin, and Milan W Svobik. 2016. “Formal Models of Non-democratic Politics.” *Annual Review of Political Science* 19 (1): 565–84.

9. Nov 24: Censorship and Repression

- Tirole, J. (2021). Digital dystopia. *American Economic Review*, 111(6), 2007-48.
- King, G., Pan, J., Roberts, M. E. (2013). How censorship in China allows government criticism but silences collective expression. *American political science Review*, 107(2), 326-343.
- Young, L.E., 2019. “The psychology of state repression: Fear and dissent decisions in Zimbabwe.” *American Political Science Review* 113(1), pp.140-155.

10. Nov 29: Democratic Backsliding & Populism

- Svolik, Milan W. 2020. “When Polarization Trumps Civic Virtue: Partisan Conflict and the Subversion of Democracy by Incumbents.” *Quarterly Journal of Political Science*
- Luo, Zhaotian and Przeworski, Adam. 2019. *Democracy and Its Vulnerabilities: Dynamics of Democratic Backsliding*

11. Dec 1: Lobbies and Mafias

- Acemoglu, D., De Feo, G., De Luca, G. D. (2020). Weak states: Causes and consequences of the Sicilian Mafia. *The Review of Economic Studies*, 87(2), 537-581.
- Dal Bó, Ernesto, Pedro Dal Bó, and Rafael Di Tella. 2006. “Plata O Plomo? Bribe and Punishment in a Theory of Political Influence.” *American Political Science Review* 100(1):41-53

Wrapping Up

1. Dec. 6: Recap Session
2. Dec. 20: **Second Midterm Exam**