Overview and Requirements:

The course will cover recent theoretical and empirical papers in Political Economy. The course is designed as a seminar for second- and higher-year graduate students. At our first class meeting, we will select a subset of papers from the list provided below, and discuss the format of the presentations. Students can discuss with me the possibility of presenting other readings within the same topics. Every week one or two students (or the instructor) will present the main ideas of some selected readings and provide the agenda for discussion. By the end of the course, you are required to write a project for a paper in Political Economy on a topic of your choice. The project (10-15 pages) must be organized in three parts. The first part must contain a general description of the issue under investigation, an accurate, quantitative account of the basic “stylized facts”, and a clearly stated research question. The second part must use coherent economic arguments to interpret the facts and attempt to answer the research question (you can set up a theoretical model, or design an empirical test, collect the data and describe the estimation techniques). The third part must summarize the main findings.

Grades:

Your final grade is a weighted average of your performance on Presentation (40%), Discussion (10%) and the Final Project (50%).

Tentative List of Readings:

1. Politics and Auctions


Persico, N., 2007, “Games of Redistributive Politics are Equivalent to All-Pay Auctions with Consolation Prizes,” mimeo.


2. Voting


3. Campaign Contributions


4. Transparency in Politics


5. Party Formation


6. Selection of Politicians


7. Experts, Career Concerns, and Reputation


