



Comparative Political Economy (CF)

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Fall 2025
Wednesday, 10.15 am to 12.15 pm

1 Course description

Why are there so many states today? Do parliamentary regimes produce better outcomes than presidential regimes? Why are hereditary monarchies more stable than military dictatorships? Does it make sense to vote?

This course covers twelve central topics in comparative political economy and the many questions they raise. “Comparative political economy” studies political institutions, but analyzes them with tools borrowed from economics. It means that, from a theoretical perspective, the unit of analysis is the individual, who is motivated to achieve goals but must act under the constraint of political institutions. Therefore, the main aim of CPE is to understand how institutions affect individual behavior and produce specific outcomes. From a methodological perspective, knowledge about the origins and effects of political institutions is drawn from statistical analysis or from experiments.

There are no prerequisites to attend this lecture, but you need to be somewhat comfortable in English (e.g., be able to take notes).

2 Program outline

Session 1

Introduction - Democracies (Sophie Panel)

Session 2

Direct democracy (Simon Persico)

Session 3

Nondemocratic regimes (Sophie Panel)

Session 4

State building (Sophie Panel)

Session 5

Civil war (Sophie Panel)

Session 6

Political leaders (Sophie Panel)

Session 7

Parliamentary and presidential regimes (Sophie Panel)

Session 8

Agencies and courts (Simon Persico)

Session 9

Electoral systems (Sophie Panel)

Session 10

Voting behavior (Sophie Panel)

Session 11

Parties and party systems (Simon Persico)

Session 12

Environmental politics and policies (Simon Persico)

3 Assessment

Written exam (2 hours) taking place in January. The exact date and time will be communicated at a later point.

Attendance is not mandatory, although it is strongly recommended : you may choose not to attend the lecture and to consult suggested readings provided at the end of each class instead. Please note that you are responsible for making up any work missed due to absence (regardless of the reason). If you do come, please be on time.