

Seminar Course

“Political Economy and Public Policy Analysis”

Lecturer: Prof. Ana Tur-Prats, Visiting Professor, University of California, Merced
[Personal Website: <https://sites.google.com/view/anatur-prats/home>]

Module: - Spezialmodul Quantitative Methoden (Quantitative Methods) (10102401 & 10102410)
- Wirtschaftspolitik (Economic Policy)

Content & Aim of Course

The objective of this course is to familiarize students with Political Economy and Public Policy Analysis, by focusing on specific topics with recent policy applications. For each topic, the lecturer will introduce during the regular meetings basic economic theories related to public economics concepts, such as environmental and health externalities, political economy and public choice theory, social insurance, income distribution and welfare programs.

The theoretical analysis of these concepts will be linked with actual policy applications, that the students are expected to develop in their research papers. These applications include, among others, solutions to climate change or to government failures, Social Security reforms or the viability of a universal basic income. Below you will find some specific examples of research topics that can be covered. Notice that some of them are broad while others are much more specific. Please take these as examples since the goal is to work together with the student to formulate their own specific research question:

- How does corruption affect economic growth?
- Does lobbying lead to information provision or to rent seeking?
- On the relationship between Governance Indicators and Economic growth. Empirical analysis using the World Bank dataset.
- The political economy of artificial intelligence
- Media and political polarization
- Which are the most successful policies in reducing poverty?
- Free riders and global climate agreements. How do recent historical experience (Kyoto, Paris) relate to this problem?
- Effects of taxation of unhealthy food and sugary drinks
- Economics rationale and effectiveness of smoking bans in public places
- What would be the impact of a Universal Basic Income program?
- Should the government finance a social insurance system of long-term care?
- Aging and Social Security reform: basic or radical?
- Does long-term unemployment insurance hurt or help individuals?
- Can “family-friendly” policies (e.g. parental leave, part-time work entitlements) reduce the gender gap in the labor market?

The aim of the course is also to acquaint students with the skills to critically read research papers, apply economic theory to real-life problems, and present and discuss papers and policy applications in the field of Political Economy and Public Policy Analysis. We will learn how to write literature summaries, formulate research questions, and develop own research papers based on the topics discussed in class.

A detailed list of topics for the term papers (including main references) and information on the course structure will be provided and discussed in the first meeting.

Course schedule and important dates

Week 1: Friday May 12th

- 10:00-11:30: Introduction (structure, schedule, term papers topics and sources of information, how to write a paper, etc.)
- 12:15-13:45: Political Economy

Week 2: Tuesday May 16th

- 8:30-10:00 Environmental and Health Externalities
- 10:15-11:45: Income Distribution and Welfare Programs

Week 3: Friday May 26th

- 10:00-11:30: Social Insurance
- 12:15-13:45: 1-to-1 meetings to discuss research ideas

Week 4: Friday June 2nd

- 10:00-11:30: Interim presentations. About 10 minutes per student
- 12:15-13:45: Interim presentations. About 10 minutes per student

Week 5: Friday June 9th

- 10:00-11:30: 1-to-1 meetings to discuss research progress
- 12:15-13:45: 1-to-1 meetings to discuss research progress

Week 6: Friday June 16th

- Office hours, by appointment

Week 7: (June 19-23)

- Work on the research paper. Check in with professor

Week 8: (June 26-30)

- Have the first draft of the research paper ready to send it to a peer. Peer reads and provides feedback within the following week

Week 9: Thursday and Friday July 6-7th

- Block seminar. Presentation of term paper and feedback by peers and professor. About 20-30 minutes + 10-15 minutes of discussion and feedback

Week 10: Friday July 14th

- Submission of final paper via email

Week 11 (July 17-21)

- Professor reads and grades term papers

Week 12 (July 24-28)

- Professor reports grades and communicates feedback to students

Main references:

- Jonathan Gruber. "Public Finance and Public Policy". Worth Publishers: New York. (the last edition is the 6th, but previous editions are more than fine too)
- Further references will be provided at the beginning of the course.

Anrechenbarkeit

Bachelor Volkswirtschaftslehre, 6LP / 6 ECTS

Zugangsvoraussetzungen & Vorkenntnisse / Prerequisites

4. oder 6. Semester; Basic knowledge of microeconomic theory is required. Basic knowledge of (micro)econometrics, in particular, modern policy-evaluation methods, is recommended (course: Introduction to Microeconometrics).

Registration



IMPORTANT: The seminar is limited to 20 persons. In case of excess demand, we will allocate slots based on a mix of lottery and study progress.

Please **register via e-mail** (incl. a current transcript of records) to ls-danzer@wiwiss.fu-berlin.de.



Deadline for registration is **Friday, 21 April 2023; 6PM.**

Examination

- Term paper (about 12 pages)
- Presentation of term paper in seminar (approximately 30 minutes)
- Additional assignments (group assignments)
- Language: English

Course language

English

Kontakt

atur-prats@ucmerced.edu, or ls-danzer@wiwiss.fu-berlin.de