

POLITICAL SCIENCE 270

INTRO TO POLITICAL ECONOMY

...and then
what?

created & directed by
professor
ANTHONY GILL



coming
AUTUMN 2019

teaching assistance by

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Some material may be inappropriate for children under 13

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UNIVERSITY of WASHINGTON

Introduction to Political Economy

Political Science 270
University of Washington
Autumn Term 2019

Prof. Anthony Gill

Office Hours:

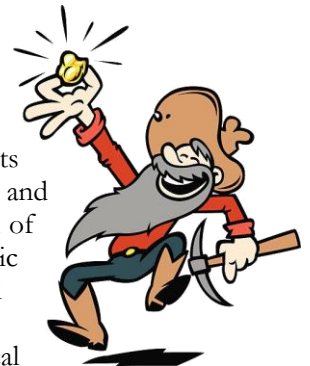
Wednesdays 12:30 – 2:30 pm in the [By George Cafe](#)¹

Gowen 25

tgill@uw.edu

Statement of Purpose

Political economy is a rapidly expanding and increasingly diverse field of inquiry in political science. This class has two purposes. First, it is designed to introduce students to the *analytical* side of political economy – i.e., the use of economic assumptions and analysis to understand political and social phenomena. We will explore a school of thought commonly known as “rational choice” and its derivatives – decision theory, public choice, and game theory. “Rational choice” analysis is contrasted frequently with cultural and psychological perspectives on human behavior, though they are not necessarily incompatible. Second, we will also tackle a fundamental question underlying all political economy inquiries: How do humans allocate resources in society? We will compare and contrast decentralized (market) and centralized (hierarchy/government) methods of allocation, spending a fair amount of time on market approaches to social issues (as that aspect of society is often overlooked by political scientists).



Being an introductory course, this class necessarily emphasizes breadth over depth. However, the professor intends for students to gain familiarity with a number of key political economy concepts and develop a number of basic analytical tools that will allow them to pursue the study of political economy more effectively in other classes. Furthermore, it is the professor's hope that students acquire a new way of looking at the world around them, one that will be helpful beyond the classroom environment.

Granted, this is not the only way to look at the world and it has its limitations (as do all theoretical perspectives), but for many scholars and students the analytical methods associated with political economy provide invaluable insights into social behavior. It also provides a good starting point from which to explore other theoretical (namely, psychological and cultural) perspectives. A further goal of the class is to prompt you to develop an *intuitive sense* of the concepts used in the class, rather than learning concepts based upon rote memorization. To that end, we will use multiple examples that are often pulled from everyday life to illustrate how these various concepts operate in familiar surroundings (including pirate ships). Homework assignments are designed to help you understand key concepts in an “everyday manner.” You will be surprised to find out that the way you solve problems on a daily basis is similar to how “big time” economic actors (e.g., world bankers, national politicians) also behave, not to mention buccaneers and wranglers. We are all human beings, after all.



¹ Note that office hours are held in public in the [By George Cafe](#) (usually near the smoothie station). If you arrive earlier than Prof. Gill, feel free to grab a round table and wave him down as he comes in. Also, due to a heavy travel schedule, office hours may be modified. Due notice will be given.



Course Requirements

Grades are based upon a quiz, two in-class examinations, homework assignments, a take-home essay, and class participation. **There will be no “make-up” examinations for anyone missing the exam date without prior approval of the professor except under conditions of extreme hardship. And late homework assignments will not be accepted without authorization of Prof. Gill.** (“Extreme hardship” constitutes events outside of one’s control; this does *not* include sleeping late, forgetting to come to class, being arrested, etc. Determining what cases qualify as “extreme hardship” will be left to the discretion of the professor and will require proof on the part of the student.) If you anticipate a scheduling conflict, you must contact the professor at least one week prior to the exam to make alternative arrangements. In such cases, an alternative exam will be given *prior to* the scheduled exam date and will be conducted at the UW Testing Center for an additional fee. The professor reserves the right to determine whether an early alternative exam will be scheduled or not. To mitigate the possibility of cheating, alternative exams will be different than the exam administered to the general class at the scheduled time. Students are responsible for reminding the professor (via email) about early exams two days prior to the exam.

Incomplete grades may only be awarded if you are doing satisfactory work up until the last two weeks of the quarter. Undergraduate students must not register for courses in which they have received an “incomplete,” since a grade earned in a repeat course will not be recorded as an “incomplete” conversion grade. To obtain credit for the course, an undergraduate student must convert an Incomplete into a passing grade no later than the last day of the next quarter. An “incomplete” not made up by the end of the next quarter (summer excluded) will be converted to the grade of 0.0 by the Registrar unless the instructor has indicated, when assigning the “incomplete” grade, that a grade other than 0.0 should be recorded if the incomplete work is not completed. The original “incomplete” grade is not removed from the transcript. Students are responsible for knowing important registration and financial aid deadlines when scheduling make-up work for the incomplete. The professor will need at least one week’s time to schedule make-up exams or assignments for incompletes.

Exams will be based on the course readings, lectures, podcasts, and discussion sections. You are expected to keep up with the weekly reading assignments and should be prepared to discuss them in section. Class/section attendance is not required but is strongly encouraged since exams will cover material presented in lecture and sections. Grades for class participation will be assessed in section, though active participation on the course discussion board will also be taken into account.

Final grades will be determined accordingly (please note date of exams):

		<i>Date</i>
Syllabus quiz	5%	Friday, October 4
Mid-term examination	25%	Wednesday, October 23
Final examination	30%	Tuesday, December 10
Take-Home Essay	10%	Friday, November 22
Homework assignments	15%	Ongoing
Section participation	15%	Ongoing

Exams will be composed of short answer and/or short essay questions. Weekly assignments will NOT be accepted electronically. You must turn them in typed and in hard copy.

The final exam is scheduled for Tuesday, December 10 at 8:30 a.m. Plan your winter break accordingly. Do not book flights for December 10 (circa 1:30 pm or earlier). Early vacation is not an excuse for getting an early exam.

The Chasse Partie

(course policies)

To promote an environment conducive to learning, and minimize negative externalities, please obey the following **classroom rules**:



NO food. Beverages are okay.

NO laptop computers, electronic tablets, cell phones, or recording devices.

Please use pen/pencil and paper for notetaking.

Do NOT talk while your fellow students are asking questions or providing commentary.

If you cannot avoid coming to class late or leaving early, do so in a manner that does NOT disturb other students. It is recommended that you come to class on time and stay for the duration. Indeed, you are strongly encouraged to show up for all lectures and sections as that is the best predictor (though no guarantee) of a good grade in the course.

Policy on grading appeals. Appeals will be accepted if a student considers that an obvious error has been made in the grading of an exam or essay. All appeals must be typewritten and are due one week following the date the exams/essays are returned to the entire section or class, not to the individual. **As grade appeals impose a time cost on the professor, there will be a “five percent fee” assessed on any grade appeal (5% based upon the total points possible on the exam). If any part of the appeal is accepted, 4% of the “fee” will be refunded. If the appeal is not accepted, the 5% “fee” will be deducted from the exam.** For final exams or papers, appeals will be accepted two weeks into the following academic quarter, which includes summer term. The typewritten appeal must address the substantive reasons why the student believes the grade to be inappropriate. Prof.

Gill reserves the right to reject the appeal and has the option of reducing the grade as the situation warrants.



IMPORTANT NOTICE:

You may NOT create an audio or video recording of this course without the expressed and written consent of the professor.

If you would like to request academic accommodations due to a disability, please contact Disabled Student Services, 011 Mary Gates Hall, 206-543-8924 (V/TDD). If you have a letter from Disabled Student Services indicating you have a disability that requires academic accommodations, please present the letter to the professor so accommodations you might need for class can be discussed. Please note that you are responsible for reminding the professor of these accommodations one week in advance of any exam or assignment.

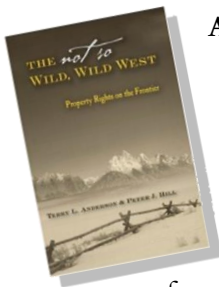
Textbooks

Required Texts

The following required texts are on sale at the University Bookstore:

Winter, H. 2005. *Trade-Offs: An Introduction to Economic Reasoning and Social Issues*. 2nd Edition. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Winter provides a very accessible text that deals with policy issues from a cost-benefit perspective. There are no solutions, only trade-offs. Be sure it has the orange cover (second edition), not the blue cover (first edition).

Leeson, P. 2009. *The Invisible Hook: The Hidden Economics of Pirates*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Aaargh! What could be more fun than reading about pirates? This is really a book about public choice theory!



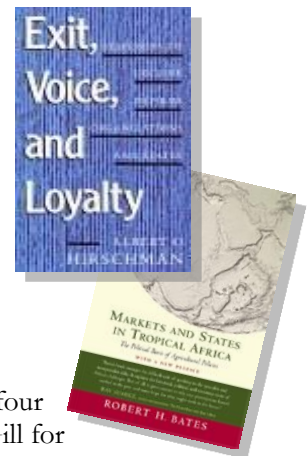
Anderson, T.L. & P.J. Hill. 2004. *The Not So Wild, Wild West: Property Rights on the Frontier*. Stanford: Stanford University Press. Yes, this book is about cowboys. But it is also about miners, farmers, settlers and people in general. Anderson & Hill address how groups of people solve some of the most basic problems of political economy and governance (kind of like pirates).

Hirschman, A.O. 1972. *Exit, Voice and Loyalty: Responses to Declines in Firms, Organizations and States*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. A classic work from an economist who had a major impact on contemporary political economy. Hirschman passed away in late 2012 without ever earning a Nobel Prize, which is a major shame.

Bates, R.H. 2014. [1981]. *Markets and States in Tropical Africa*. Berkeley: University of California Press. Updated Edition. Implicitly using a “rational choice” perspective, Bates offers a direct challenge to more macro theories of underdevelopment. Although it deals with Africa in the 1970s, it is considered a landmark work today as evidenced by the “revised edition” we are using. History teaches important lessons and sometimes things don’t change very much.



Please note: All readings are on reserve at the Odegaard Library (four hour reserve). If you find these readings interesting, consult Prof. Gill for a list of similar books!





Course Plan and Reading & Listening Assignments

Lectures and discussion sections are meant to complement the readings, not substitute for them. Important themes and concepts found in the readings may not necessarily be covered in lecture, and vice versa. Nonetheless, students are responsible for the content of the weekly reading assignments. Questions pertaining to the readings always are welcome in class. Remember, exam questions will be drawn from readings, lectures, required podcasts, and discussion sections, thus careful study of the readings and regular class attendance is strongly advised.

You will also be assigned several podcasts to listen to and a few short videos to watch, mostly at the beginning of the course. The podcasts can be found at the EconTalk website and are designed to supplement the lectures with different voices. EconTalk has become one of the most popular economic podcasts on the web and pitches discussions of economic theories in a manner accessible to a lay (non-academic) audience, yet retains a high degree of intellectual rigor. You can find direct links to the assigned podcasts in the syllabus, on the course website, or by going directly to www.econtalk.org. You can listen to each podcast directly from your computer or subscribe via iTunes or the website's RSS feed. Videos will also be "hot-linked" in this syllabus.



The goal for the readings is to have the **readings completed by the last day noted in the segment listed on the syllabus below**. (This is not an invitation to do all the readings late the night before; pace yourself and be sure to have some of the readings done by the first section meeting in that segment.) Your TA will give you an indication of what readings you may be discussing in section, thus be sure to attend section and pay attention to email communications.

Note: **Readings may be subject to change at the professor's discretion**. I typically set ambitious goals and often do not have sufficient time in a 10-week quarter to finish all that I assign. My philosophy is to set the bar high with the expectation that this will push us to our academic limits, as opposed to setting the bar too low and getting bored and/or overconfident. Due notice will be given if there are modifications to the reading assignments. We may not get to the Robert Bates book.

The homework assignments are meant to provide you with some "practical experience" with the theoretical concepts being introduced in this class. Many of the assignments ask you to think through problems before you read about them in the assigned books and articles. There is a benefit to doing the hard work of thinking through a problem before you read about a similar application. Cowboys in the 1880s didn't have the advantage of studying the political economy of property rights before they had to move a cattle herd over a thousand-mile trek. These folks did political economy on a "day-to-day" basis without textbooks, and they managed quite well. In part, these exercises are intended to show you how lay people (non-economists) have *intuitive knowledge* about basic economic principles.

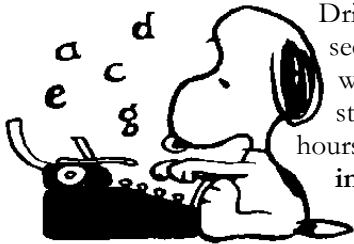
Finally, several weeks have **optional** readings, videos or podcasts assigned. This material is for those interested in taking their education in political economy a little deeper. The professor may post additional suggestions on the course website.

A Note on Discussion Sections & Homework Schedule



During the 2017 autumn term, POL S 270 moved to a system of discussion sections meeting only once per week (as compared to twice per week in the past). This means there will be less time to discuss the assigned readings, thus there will be **more student responsibility in comprehending the readings**. As noted, the professor will not lecture directly from the assigned readings, though he may touch upon some of the more important aspects of them at points. Use the professor and teaching assistants' office hours judiciously if you have questions on the reading. Note that there will likely be a rush for the professor/teaching assistants' time in the day or two leading up to the mid-term or final exam. Thus, it would be wise to bring any questions you may have to the instructors **as early as possible** instead of waiting for the last minute. Emails sent 24 hours before an exam asking for clarification of course content will not be answered. The time to ask questions is sooner rather than later.

Sections will largely be devoted to discussing the seven homework assignments that are due throughout the term. These assignments are designed to give you some relatively common and real-life examples of the political economy concepts that we are learning at the time. (Note that some of the later assignments still involve concepts introduced early in the term, and this is particularly true for "Cattle Drive.") Your assignments must be turned in at the beginning of the discussion section on the day that they are due (see schedule below), and must be typewritten with normal margins and font. Professional presentation is essential. You are strongly encouraged to finish the assignment early, set it aside for at least several hours, and then **proofread the assignment** and make corrections. **Everybody improves with a rewrite.** Everybody!



Homework assignments are graded on a check-plus, check, check-minus, and zero (not turned in) basis. There are several advantages to not using a numerical system (100-point or 4-point) scale for these assignments. First, students become less obsessed with, or arguing over, each marginal grade point (e.g., the difference between a 3.5 and 3.6), which then frees them to be a bit more risk-taking and creative in the homework assignments. It also takes a bit of the stress off the student. Second, this makes the grading a bit easier for the teaching assistants as they need not fret over those marginal grade point differences either, and instead have three broad categories with which to assess the effort, comprehension, and creativity of students. At the end of the term, the entire body of homework assignments will be taken into account, including consistently high performance and improvement over time. In general, homework assignments tend to help your final grade unless you perform at a consistently low level without improvement and/or fail to complete the assignments by the deadlines. If you anticipate a conflict with one of the due dates, work ahead and make arrangements to turn the assignment in early.

The due dates for the homework assignments are as follows:

Seat Assignment	Friday, September 27
Making the Grade	Friday, October 4
Trade-Off Winds	Friday, October 11
Flood Follies	Friday, October 18
Trash Talk	Friday, November 1
Cattle Drive	Friday, November 8
Take-Home Essay	Friday, November 22





Introduction: What Is "Political Economy"?

What is political economy? For that matter, what is politics? What is economics? Why is it important to study the two fields together? What are the large debates that occupy the minds of political economists? This introductory section frames the issues and concepts of central concern to the study of political economy.

I. The Economic Way of Thinking: An Introduction

(9/25 – 10/9)

- The political economy of peanuts and Pintos.
- Contrasting approaches: rationality, culture and psychology.
- Beyond cash: Thinking in terms of costs, benefits, and resources.
- Who seeks rent?

Readings (~119 pp):

- Winter, H. *Trade-Offs*, Preface to First Edition, Chapters 1 - 4 (pp. xiii – 62).
- Leeson, P. *Invisible Hook*, Preface and Chapter 1. (pp. xiii – 22).
- Hayek, F.A. “The Use of Knowledge in Society.” On course website.
- Heyne, P. “Are Economists Basically Immoral?” in *Are Economists Basically Immoral and Other Essays on Economics, Ethics, & Religion*. On course website.²
- Henderson, D. “[Rent-Seeking](#).” *Concise Encyclopedia of Economics* (online – ctrl+click article title to access).

Podcast & Video Assignment (ctrl-click link to connect):

- Munger on [Price Gouging](#) (listen after reading Hayek article).
- I, Pencil: The Movie* (about 6 ½ mins) or read the [original article](#).



HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS:

- Seat Assignment (due Friday, Sept. 27 at the beginning of section).
- Making the Grade (due Friday, Oct. 4 at the beginning of section).

Optional Material:

- [“The Pretense of Knowledge.”](#) F.A. Hayek’s Nobel Laureate speech. (Very short piece that may be helpful in understanding the “Use of Knowledge” article.)
- Roberts, R. “How Markets Use Knowledge.” Unpublished paper. On course website.
- D. Boudreaux on [Reading Hayek](#) (Econtalk podcast).
- Munger on [John Locke, Prices, and Hurricane Sandy](#). (A more nuanced version of the price gouging podcast above.)
- Sally Satel on [Organ Donations](#) (Econtalk podcast).
- [Is Price Gouging Immoral? Should It Be Illegal?](#) (movie of about 5 mins)

² Paul Heyne was a lecturer in the Department of Economics at the University of Washington until his death in 2000. His style of teaching inspired this course as he sought to make economics accessible to a broad audience and demonstrate that it was as much of a “way of thinking” as it was a topic of inquiry. The UW Economics Department has named a lecture series after this esteemed scholar. Prof. Gill was one of the guest speakers for this series in 2018.

Rational Choice:

The Economics of Human (& Pirate) Behavior



What can economists teach political scientists, if anything? Is it possible to explain human behavior and complex political phenomena based on a few simple assumptions about how people calculate costs and benefits? This section examines how the tools of microeconomics have informed our understanding of politics and society at large. You might be surprised where economics is showing up these days!

II. Rational Choice: The Basic Assumptions & A Few Applications

(10/9 – 10/18)

- Why vote? Why not?
- A market for those with heart (two kidneys, lungs and a liver).
- Organizing an anarchic society: the economics of pirate democracy.

Readings (~120 pp):

- Winter, H. *Trade-Offs*, Chapters 5 - 6 (pp. 63-102).
- Leeson, P. *Invisible Hook*, Chapters 2 - 4 (pp. 23-106).

Podcast & Video Assignment:

- Munger's 4-minute [video on externalities and potato chips](#).³

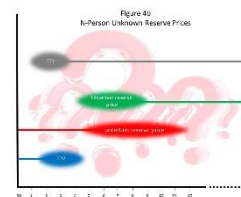
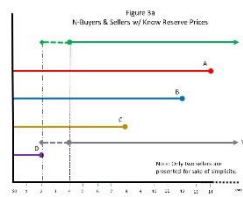
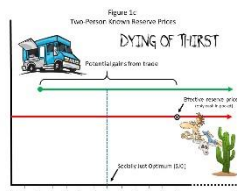


HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT:

- Trade-Off Winds (due Friday, Oct. 11 at the beginning of section).

Optional Material:

- [Munger on Milk](#). (Just a fun podcast that helps us understand incentives.)
- [Munger on Sports, Norms, Rules, and the Code](#).⁴ (Just in time for the football season.)
- D. Boudreaux on [Public Choice](#). (A great summary of this important subfield).
- Hasnas, J. 2008. "The Obviousness of Anarchy." On course website.
- Gill, A. 2019. "An Exchange Theory of Social Justice." *Independent Review*. On course website. (Using the simple concept of "gains from trade," your course instructor builds a theory of social justice and demonstrates what he does when not in the classroom.)



³ There are an increasing number of very good, short videos that explain a variety of economic concepts available on the interwebs. As of the current date, most of them tend to deal with concepts that we use early on in the course. I am only requiring a very small handful of these delicious video chips, but visit the course website for suggestions for other ones.

⁴ Prof. Gill has become increasingly interested in the political economy of culture, in large part inspired by this podcast. Humans are remarkably capable of organizing social life in the absence of government, and this is an "everyday" example of how this occurs.

**NOTE: The midterm exam is scheduled for Wednesday, October 23.
Bring a LARGE exam (blue or green) booklet.
Do NOT write your name on the exam booklet until instructed to do so.**



III. More Rational Choosing: Further Explorations.

(10/18 – 10/25)

- Hazardous morals.
- Does bailing out work in a flood?
- Walking the plank: How to be a pirate in four easy steps.
- The blind leading the blind, and why early diners always get window seats.

Readings (~140 pp):

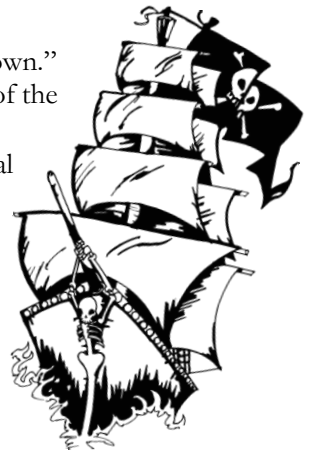
- Winter, H. *Trade-Offs*, Chapters 7 - 8 (pp. 129-170).
- Leeson, P. *Invisible Hook*, Chapters 5, 7 & 8 (pp. 107-205).
- Roberts, R. 2010. "Gambling with Other People's Money." Working paper. Mercatus Center: George Mason University. (pp. 1-21, remaining pages are optional).⁵ On course website.

HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS:

- Flood Follies (due Friday, Oct. 18 at the beginning of section). Do this assignment before reading Roberts' paper in next section.

Optional Material:

- Liebowitz, S. 2008. "Anatomy of a Train Wreck: Causes of the Mortgage Meltdown." *Independent Policy Report*. Oakland, CA: The Independent Institute. (A discussion of the background of the 1998 financial crisis.) On course website.
- Barofsky on [Bailouts](#). (A Washington DC regulator talks about the 2008 financial crisis.)
- Zingales on [Capitalism and Crony Capitalism](#). (What's the difference?)
- Munger on [Crony Capitalism](#). (Munger asks if it is inevitable?)
- Boettke on [Katrina & the Economics of Disaster](#). (A good podcast for the homework assignment. Substitute Sandy or Dorian for Katrina and this topic never gets old.)



⁵ This paper became [a short book now available at Amazon](#).



Join Together:

The Economics of Collective Action

This section deals with one of the central themes in political economy: collective action. How do people come together to make group decisions regarding rules and regulations within society? By studying the creation of property rights in the anarchic West of the 1800s, we will get a better understanding of the solutions to collective action problems. Related issues will include the dilemma of the commons (a sub-species of collective action problems), principal-agent theory and the importance of transaction costs.

IV. Join Together: The Logic of Collective Action.

(10/26 – 11/13)

- Public goods, public bads, common pools, and exclusive clubs.
- Stampede: The dilemma of the commons.
- Can an invisible hand have a green thumb?

Readings (~104 pp):

- Anderson, T. & P.J. Hill. *The Not So Wild, Wild West*. Chpts. 1-2 and 5-6 (pp. 1-33 & 77-119).⁶
- Ostrom, E. 1990. *Governing the Commons: The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action*. (pp. 1-38 and 58-65). On course website.

Podcast Assignment:

No podcast assignment.

HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT:

- Trash Talk (due Friday, Nov. 1 at the beginning of section).

Optional Material:

- Munger on [Shortages, Prices, & Competition](#) (health care economics)
- Anderson on the [Environment and Property Rights](#).
- Anderson on [Native American Economics](#) (more on property rights).
- Munger on [Recycling and Peak Oil](#) (environmental economics).



⁶ Showing some sensitivity to the reading load, I am not requiring chapters 3 and 4 in Anderson & Hill. This will undoubtedly get some people upset. However, I strongly encourage you to read these chapters that discuss how relations between settlers and Indians developed over time.

V. You Got Game? A Brief Introduction to Game Theory.

(11/14 – 11/22)

- Convicts, coffee and cowboys.
- Solving the CA problem in the Wild, Wild West.
- Dirty rental cars.

Readings (~116 pp):

- Anderson, T. & P.J. Hill. *The Not So Wild, Wild West*. Chpts. 8-11. (pp. 138-212).
- Anderson, T. & L. Huggins. *Greener than Thou*. Chpts. 4-5 (pp. 59-96). On course website. (This book was ordered for the UW Bookstore but you need not purchase it.)

Podcast Assignment:

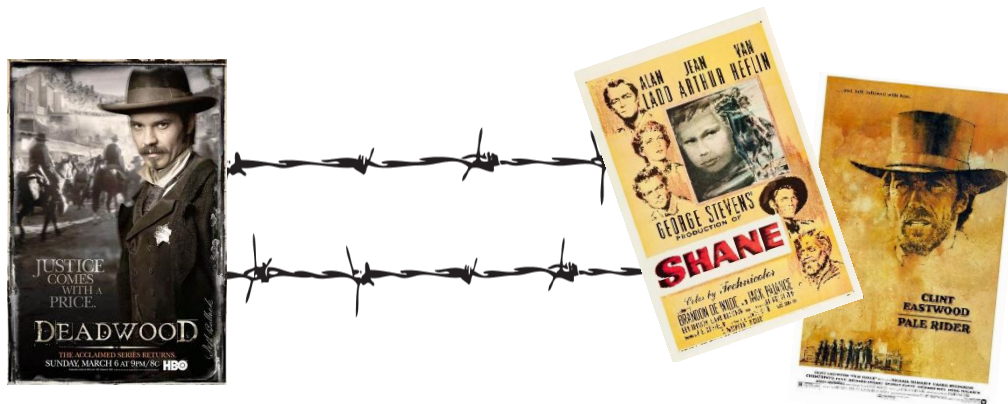
None.

HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT:

- Cattle Drive (due Wednesday, Nov. 8 at the beginning of section).⁷
- Take-Home Essay (due Friday, Nov. 22 at the beginning of section).

Optional Material:

- Boettke on [The Ostrows and the Bloomington School](#). (Political scientists!)⁸
- Benjamin, D. 2010. "Recycling Myths Revisited." *PERC Policy Series*, No. 47. (This article will shatter some of your deeply held beliefs about waste disposal.) On course website.
- Yandle, B. 1999. "Bootleggers & Baptists in Retrospect." *Regulation*. On course website (or listen to [the podcast](#)).
- Movie Time: *Shane* (1953) or *Pale Rider* (1985).⁹ Find these great films on your own.



⁷ You will be reading about property rights in the late 19th century when you turn to the Anderson & Hill book. However, use the concepts we've developed in this class to see if you can solve the problem. Remember, the ranchers and cowboys who had to manage cattle in 1875 did not have a copy of *The Not So Wild, Wild West* to guide them; they had to figure it out all by their "lonesome."

⁸ One of the political science department's professors – Aseem Prakash – trained under Nobel Laureate Elinor Ostrom. Ostrom is technically the first political scientist to receive the Nobel Prize in Economics, although others such as Hayek and Hurwicz held degrees in political science and law.

⁹ Both films deal with conflict that surrounds the definition of property rights on the western frontier. *Shane* was actually based upon the Johnson County War between farmers and ranchers in Wyoming. *Pale Rider* is essentially a remake of *Shane*, but with miners. A number of other great Westerns (including the HBO series *Deadwood*) actually deal with the definition of property rights in an anarchic environment. Political economy is the stuff of great Hollywood drama!

Should I Stay or Should I Go?

The Economics of Discontent & Remediation



What do you do when you receive consistently bad service at a local restaurant? What can your actions (or options) in this situation tell us about the quality of public schools? What about immigration and social protest? Who is more likely to raise a fuss about something they dislike? If you stick around and are loyal to this class to this point, you just might find out!

VI. Love It or Leave It

(11/23 – 11/29)

- Why did the Redcoats wear red coats?
- How do good people react to bad situations?
- Loyalty test.
- Choosing ice cream, choosing schools.

Readings (~91 pp):

- Hirschman, A. *Exit, Voice and Loyalty*. Chpts. 1-4, 7, and 9.

Podcast Assignment:

- None.

HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT:

Cheer the Dawgs onto victory at the 2019 Apple Cup! (Optional.¹⁰)

Optional Material:

- Burkhauser on [the Middle Class](#). (Good news.)
- Meyer on the [Middle Class, Poverty, and Inequality](#). (More good news.)
- Rauh on [Public Pensions](#). (Not so good news.)



¹⁰ Prof. Gill has been told that it is Pac-12 and UW policy to downplay athletic rivalries amongst the universities in the conference, thus students should not feel obligated to cheer for the Huskies. If you cheer for the Huskies, please be sure not to cheer against WSU. This is only an optional assignment. Please remember to be respectful of individuals who attend Washington State University.

Conclusion: Applied Political Economy

Can a theoretical understanding of political economy be used to understand, and perhaps influence, events in our everyday lives? This section of the course examines one major application of political economy -- the persistence of rural poverty in Africa -- and ponders how an "economic way of thinking" might be applied to other situations.



VII. Putting It All Together: Micro Analysis for Macro Problems

(11/29 – 12/8)

- Why is Africa “underdeveloped”?
- Peanut policy redux.
- Get your property rights right!

Readings (~117 pp.):

- Bates, R. *Markets and States in Tropical Africa*. All.

Podcast Assignment:

None.

HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT:


No homework assignment. When did you start studying for the final exam?

Optional Material:

- Munger on [Microfinance, Savings, and Poverty](#). (A less sanguine view of microcredit that surprised Prof. Gill.)
- Easterly on [Benevolent Autocrats and Growth](#). (Do dictators always grow fast?)
- Blattman on [Chickens, Cash, and Development Economics](#). (Cash or chicken?)

FINAL EXAM: Tuesday, December 10, 8:30 am – 10:20 am.
Set your alarm clock (or two) to make sure you get up in time.
Show up on time and with a large, blank exam booklet in hand.

An Important Pedagogical* Note about this Class



POL S 270 is considered an upper division course. As such, I expect that students have adjusted to the more rigorous intellectual demands of university life. In general, I prefer not to teach directly from the text as I assume that students will keep up with the readings and will make a faithful effort to comprehend what is in the readings. Questions about difficult concepts or passages in the readings are always welcomed in lecture, section and/or office hours.

Do not expect that I will lecture on everything in the readings. You should expect that I will present the material in the text in a different way, or with my specific interpretation of the material. Hearing my interpretation of the reading material will allow you to view the readings in a slightly different light and provide you with a more robust understanding of the topic under discussion.

There is a high likelihood that the professor's lectures will run a bit behind the syllabus. Nonetheless, it is important that you keep to the reading schedule listed above. While the class may get "out of sync" a bit, it doesn't hurt to read something early, hear a different take in lecture, and then discuss it in section. This is how learning progresses, via continual re-visitation.

I expect students in my course to take the class seriously. I enjoy playing games in class, pressing students about their thoughts on a subject, and generally being playful with ideas. You may incorrectly interpret this as a lack of seriousness on my part. Nothing could be further from the truth. I have developed a deep passion for the subjects that I teach and want to share that passion with you.

Sometimes I will tell a student that he or she is wrong. Sometimes students will point out that I am incorrect. **Making mistakes and being corrected is a crucial part of the learning process.** If you are afraid of being corrected or challenged in class, you should reconsider what you are doing in college. That sounds harsh, but it is the truth. A university agenda that caters exclusively to the self-esteem of students and avoids ideas that challenge them does a great disservice to the intellectual development of those students. I will not partake in this watered-down pedagogy. You should demand no less.

Who is paying attention? The first person who reads this and posts a picture of an adorable Siberian Husky dog on the course website under the message entitled "Contest" on the Announcement page will get a chance to compete for a cool prize on the first day of class. If you are not first, still post a picture of a dog, preferably a Husky or Malamute, to see how many people actually read the syllabus. And the first person to post a picture of them with Dubs II will also receive a prize. Do not tell anybody else about this competition.

Sincerely,

Prof. Gill



* Pedagogy is a fancy schmancy way of saying "method or philosophy of teaching."

An Important Note about Student Responsibility

You will learn many things in college, from anthropology to zoology and all things in between. However, the most important thing that any student should take away from college is the ability to set goals, develop the self-discipline to achieve them, and overcome obstacles along the way. College is an ideal environment to cultivate the fundamental skills that will be important to you in your future career, whether that be working for a law firm, being a manager in a large corporation, running your own small business, or working at a gas station. These fundamental skills include showing up on time, being able to learn from your mistakes, accepting corrective advice, and being able to overcome obstacles that temporarily divert you from your goals.

I often advise students to behave as if taking a course in political economy was their job. Would you expect to advance in your career, or earn a raise, if you consistently showed up late to meetings? Would you expect to gain favor with your employer if you blamed him or her for an error you made? How long would your employment last if you continually asked for special exemptions on exams and papers because you didn't get an early start on the assignment and you have other classes that have exams?

Given that personal responsibility and self-discipline are critical skills that need to be developed, I am going to challenge the students in this course to do the following:

- **Show up** for all lectures and discussion sections on time. You (and others) are paying substantial resources for your education; make the most of it by attending class with a professional attitude.
- **Plan ahead** for exams and assignments. Start studying earlier than the night before for an exam. Have your homework assignments printed out the night before they are due, not the morning of, and remember to turn them in on time.
- A **midterm and final exam** is not just a snapshot of what you happen to know on a specific date. Rather, it is an indication of how well you have been organizing your thoughts over time. As such, I frequently tell students that the exams begin not on the date and time listed in the syllabus, but they **really start on the first day of class**.
- **Participate** in section discussion and the online forum in a respectful manner and one that engages the material meaningfully. Be prepared when people debate your assertions.
- **Do NOT schedule early winter/spring break** airline reservations and expect the professor to give you a personalized exam so that you don't have to pay a rebooking fee. (This course is about trade-offs and you will need to weigh whether missing the final exam is less important than getting an extra few days of beach time. It may be for some people, and that is fine.)
- **Do NOT consistently miss lecture/section**, fail to turn in assignments, and then expect that the professor will give you a "passing" grade because you need to graduate and/or it affects your financial aid status.
- **Do NOT expect private tutoring sessions**. I teach a large number of students, as well as having other professional duties. As such, I do not have the time to review an entire lecture or three weeks of lectures during office hours. Office hours are to be used for directed, clarifying questions or specific comments. Prof. Gill also uses his office hours for group discussions where students are encouraged to engage with one another.
- **Do NOT ask for the professor's lecture notes or PowerPoint slides**. I won't give those out and they are not posted online. Period. Don't ask for them. Seriously.
- **I do NOT offer "extra credit"** to students who miss homework assignments or do poorly on exams. It is important to master the "regular credit" before asking for anything "extra." Do not ask for extra credit.

- **Only use your UW NetID email for communicating with faculty.** FERPA regulations restrict what the faculty can discuss with students over email, and in order for us to ensure we are talking to an enrolled student it is imperative that you only use your official UW email when interacting with faculty, teaching assistants, and administrators. In the professional world, your employer will often require you to only use your corporate email address for business use and separate your personal from professional email. Start practicing this now. The professor and TAs will not answer emails from private accounts even if they are “emergencies” the morning before an exam.
- **Communicate effectively** with your teaching assistants and professor. Proper grammar and spelling are always appreciated, as are informative “subject lines” in email communication. (True story: A student became upset with me for not being responsive after emailing me a problem with the subject line “hey.”)
- **It is unwise to opt out of the course email list.** This is a major means of communication between the professor and students. *It is wise* to do a regular check of your university email account in the evening in the event of any announcements (e.g., class cancellations because of snow). The professor will try to post important notices no later than 9:00 pm.
- **Plan ahead.** Anticipate potential roadblocks to the best of your ability and have a “Plan B.” This means that you shouldn’t wait until five minutes before an assignment is due to print it out at the library. Printers always break right before an assignment is due. Get your work done early. Keep backup files of your work. Catch an earlier bus on the day of an important exam.
- **If a problem arises** – and there are always surprises and emergencies in life – bring it to the attention of your teaching assistant and/or professor early in the process. Also, try to suggest a couple possible solutions to any problems that you might see arising. (Hint: A person who brings problems to an employer’s attention is typical employee; a person who identifies a problem and offers several solutions is a valuable employee.)
- **Use common sense** in all other areas of this class to cover anything that might have been missed on this list. Always ask yourself, “If I did this on the job, how would it affect my career?”
- **Playing computer games, texting, or surfing the Internet is distracting to those around you.** Don’t do it. Students often claim they are concerned about various negative externalities in society (e.g., air pollution), but often neglect to understand how their own personal actions affect those around them. Quiet attentiveness to lectures, when you are not asking questions or offering comments, will be considered the default option. If you must play video games during the regularly scheduled class period, do so elsewhere (recognizing that this means missing class).
- **Do NOT monopolize the professor’s time.** Your learning is important, but this is true for all other students in the class. Individuals who feel it necessary to ask questions every five minutes during lecture will be asked to cease and desist. I have had students who insisted class be taught a different way and in one that they designed themselves. While such creativity is admirable, there are students who enrolled in this class for the content and material designed by the current professor. Respect their choices.
- **Do NOT cheat.** We are on the lookout for plagiarized papers and papers contracted out to other individuals. There are several means that we have for detecting cheating and all cases of academic misconduct will be reported to the administration for action. You are paying a great deal of money (and time) to have your abilities tested here at the university. You want an honest assessment of those skills so that you can discover your weaknesses and improve yourself. Denying yourself that information will only hurt you in the long-run.

The above advice may sound patronizing to some students who are well-prepared for class. However, you should know that a significant portion of students in a large lecture class will not have even looked at the syllabus by the third or fourth week of the term and then expect me to give them a special dispensation for their inaction. Managing these issues takes time and affects my ability to prepare for class, work with other students who are keeping up with assignments, or affects my other professional duties. In other words, an individual student can impose a negative externality on other students via their actions. Each of the pointers on student responsibility listed above derives from some previous student behavior over the past two decades, often involving multiple students at different times. I put in a great deal of effort into this course, more than I am required to. I do this because I have a passion for the class and education. However, students looking for a quick grade or who seek to manipulate the rules to avoid doing the requisite coursework diminish that passion.



With sincere concern for your academic and professional future,

Prof. Gill

Addendum

RELIGIOUS ACCOMMODATIONS POLICY

Washington state law requires that UW develop a policy for accommodation of student absences or significant hardship due to reasons of faith or conscience, or for organized religious activities. The UW's policy, including more information about how to request an accommodation, is available at Religious Accommodations Policy (<https://registrar.washington.edu/staffandfaculty/religious-accommodations-policy/>). Accommodations *must be requested within the first two weeks* of this course using the Religious Accommodations Request form (<https://registrar.washington.edu/students/religious-accommodations-request/>).

RESOURCES ON MENTAL HEALTH

Questions on mental health resources should be directed to the [UW Counseling Center](#). This website contains a list of helpful resources.