

Political Economy A | ECP77174

Year	1
ECTS Credits	5
Contact Hours	8 hours of lectures and 3 hours of tutorials
Pre-Requisite	Nil
Semester	2
Module Leader and Lecturer	Professor Nicola Fontana
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Module Outline:

The course will expose students to the frontier of the research in the field of political economics, which applies the toolbox of economic analysis to the study of politics.

The course will be organized around a series of topics: starting with the economic analysis of voting decision, it will then focus on the selection and motivations of politicians and their impact on public policy, and on questions such as political accountability and corruption; it will then examine the role of mass media and its impact on electoral politics and policymaking, as well as the issue of political distortions through examples such as patronage politics, lobbying, and political connections; finally, it will discuss issues related to organised crime, conflict and violence, as well as the origins, persistence and impact of political institutions.

Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this module, students should be able to:

- Comfortably analyze different theories of social choice (how do groups of rational individuals take decisions) and collective action (how do groups of rational individuals take actions) and voting
- Analyze the effect of political variables on the determination of economic outcomes. What is the impact of different political systems on economic outcomes (Growth, Inequality, Fiscal Policy, Public Goods)? How can special groups of individuals enhance their well-being by political action? What is lobbying? What is the effect of contributions to politicians on political outcomes?
- Analyze the effect of Mass Media on political outcomes, individual perceptions and voting decisions. How do media shape individual opinions

and therefore their voting decisions? How does media affect citizens' capacity to hold politicians accountable?

- Analyze the effect of Organized Crime and Corruption on political outcomes, economic decisions (public goods, fiscal policy) and social cohesion?



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Topics covered in this module will include:

- the economic analysis of voting decision,
- the selection and motivations of politicians and their impact on public policy,
- political accountability and corruption
- the role of mass media and its impact on electoral politics and policy-making,
- organised crime, conflict and violence

Assessment:

Assessment for the course is based on coursework (30%) and one 1.5-hour examination (70%).

Recommended Reading List:

Class readings consist mainly of journal articles, working papers and book chapters mostly available online from JSTOR (or other library e-resources). In addition to the topic-specific readings, the following general and methodological readings are recommended:

- Besley, T. *Principled Agents: the Political Economy of Good Government* , Oxford University Press, 2006
- Persson, T. e G. Tabellini, *Political Economics: Explaining Economic Outcomes* , MIT Press, 2000
- Angrist and Pischke. "Mostly harmless econometrics"