Course Description

Each candidate has a plan for America. What are these plans? What is the basis of each proposal? What will be the impact of these ideas? Which would be best for the country? In this course students will examine and debate the economic ideas and philosophies of the presidential candidates, focusing on the potential impacts of the proposals.

This course is designed to provide students with an introduction to the field of positive political economy. Positive political economy seeks to understand and explain policy outcomes and political behavior. The approach taken is an interdisciplinary one that utilizes tools and concepts from economics to study politics and political behavior. The course will presume that political actors are rational and goal oriented. Political outcomes are then explained by the interaction between these actors within the (institutional) constraints of their environment. All parties are welcome in this debate!

Goals

(1) Students will apply economic theories and concepts to the study of political action and the formation of policy.
(2) Students will learn how economic and political forces may shape the incentives and constraints of policymakers and other political actors.
(3) Students will begin to recognize the role of institutions in shaping both political action and policy outcomes.

Prerequisites: none

Requirements

Exam 1 25%
Exam 2 25%
Assignments 10%
Position Papers 40%

There will be two in-class examinations. These exams will count for a total of 50% of your grade. In addition to the exams, you will be required to complete two short written assignments. These assignments will require you to apply the concepts discussed in class. Students will also be expected to share their applications with the rest of the class in a group discussion. Assignments will count for 10% of your grade. A final position paper will be completed by the end of the term and will count for 40% of your grade. Class participation is strongly encouraged and may favorably affect your grade.
Required readings
There are no required texts for the class but there will be many readings posted on blackboard

Late Work:
The dates provided in this syllabus are designed to reach the completion of all work within the eight week time frame. Material is cumulative in nature and failure to meet any deadline will jeopardize the completion of the course within the allotted time frame. Assignments received one week late will be docked 25% of the total points possible. Assignments two weeks late will be docked 50% of the total. Assignments will not be accepted more than two weeks late. This policy may be waived in extreme cases.

Special Notes:
All course communication between the instructor and students must be through the use of your Doane email address. If you send the instructor anything via another email address, it will not be accepted.