

PPHA 31603

Political Institutions and Policy Making in the Developing World

Professor:	Luis Martinez
Class time, place:	TTh 9:00-10:20 (Harris 142) ; TTh 13:30-14:50 (Harris 289B)
Office:	Harris 302B
Office Hours:	Th 15:30-17:00
Email:	luismartinez@uchicago.edu

THIS IS A PRELIMINARY VERSION OF THE SYLLABUS AND REMAINS SUBJECT TO CHANGE. CLICK [HERE](#) FOR THE LATEST VERSION

Course Description

This course introduces students to core topics and concepts in political institutions and policy-making. The course consists of two halves. The first half will constitute the common core of both PPHA 31603 (“Developing World”) and PPHA 31604 (“Developed World”). It develops fundamental theoretical and empirical tools for exploring policy-making and democratic performance.

The second half offers students the option to focus on a specialized set of topics of particular relevance to policy-making in developing countries. It provides an overview on the functioning of politics in weakly institutionalized settings and explores the ways in which political institutions hinder or contribute to economic development.

Lessons about political institutions and the policy making process will be understood from the perspective of a policy entrepreneur—that is, an individual or organization that develops strategy in order to advance policy change in legislative, executive, and judicial branches of government.

Requirements and Course Grading

Evaluation will be identical for both PPHA 31603 (“Developing World”) and PPHA 31604 (“Developed World”).

Non-examination assessment: Outside of examinations, your assessment will be conducted in two parts.

1. First, you will be assigned four (4) problem sets, which account for 20% of your final grade (5% each). These problem sets will help you revise the material covered in class and are great practice for the examinations. They must be handed in at the beginning of class on the specified date.
 - Problem set 1 - Assigned: January 16; Due: January 23.
 - Problem set 2 - Assigned: January 25; Due: February 01.
 - Problem set 3 - Assigned: February 15; Due: February 22.

– Problem set 4 - Assigned: March 01; Due: March 08.

2. Second, you will be assessed on a writing assignment, which accounts for 20% of your course grade. Further instructions will be provided later in the term, but this is basically a short piece of writing in which you employ the analytical tools developed during the course to study a specific policy question. This assessment is managed and evaluated jointly with the Harris Writing Program.

– ASSIGNED: February 13.

– DUE: March 06.

Examination assessment: There will be two examinations:

1. Mid-term (30% of your course grade). This exam takes place in class, without access to any notes or books. It evaluates the material covered in the common core (first half).

– DATE: February 8

2. Final (30% of your course grade). This exam takes place after the end of classes. Notes or books are not allowed. This exam evaluates the material covered in the second half of the course.

– DATE AND LOCATION: Tuesday, March 13, 9am - 12m, Lecture Hall, Rooms 140C, 140B, 289A, 289B

Policy on late assignments (problem sets): Students will be penalized 20 points (out of 100) for each day late. The penalty may be relaxed in extenuating circumstances, such as illness or family/personal emergencies. If you must submit an assignment late, contact a TA before the due date to make arrangements.

Lectures: Attendance at all lectures is advisable. The material covered in the lecture will usually not follow closely the content of the readings. All lecture material is examinable, unless otherwise stated.

Readings: There is one, and only one, required reading for each session. Students are expected to closely engage with every required reading. The number of pages assigned per week is intentionally left small, with the expectation that students will read carefully and come to class prepared to discuss the readings. Students are expected to participate actively in class, with the quality of participation being much more important than the quantity. The readings will prove very useful for the exams (e.g. essays) and for the writing assignment. Links to each reading are provided. “Gated” links mostly to publishers’ websites (final versions) and may require on-campus access. “Ungated” links to authors’ websites and may correspond to preliminary versions (they may also stop working).

Course Outline

PART I: COMMON CORE

1. Thursday, January 4: *Introduction to Policy-making and the Political Process*

Reading: Acemoglu, D. and Robinson, J. (2013), *Economics versus Politics: Pitfalls of Policy Advice*, *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 27 (2), 173–192 [gated][ungated]

2. Tuesday, January 9: *The Politics of Impossibility*

Reading: Sen, Amartya. (1998), *Nobel Lecture: The Possibility of Social Choice* [ungated]

3. Thursday, January 11: *Spatial Models of Politics*

Reading: Shepsle, K., Chapter 5: Spatial Models of Majority Rule, in *Analyzing Politics: Rationality, Behavior, and Institutions*, Norton, 2010

4. Tuesday, January 16: *The Spatial Model in Action: Income Inequality and Taxation*

Reading: Alesina, A., Glaeser, E., and Sacerdote, B. (2001), *Why Doesn't the United States Have a European-Style Welfare State?*, *Brookings Papers on Economic Activity* 2001-2 [gated] [ungated]

5. Thursday, January 18: *The Spatial Model in Action: The Transition to Democracy*

Reading: Drazen, A. (2007), *Four Reviews of Economic Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*, *The Economic Journal*, 117 (517), F162-F183 [gated]

6. Tuesday, January 23: *Political Systems Across the World*

Reading: Norris, P. (1997), *Choosing Electoral Systems*, *International Political Science Review*, 18 (3), 297–312 [gated] [ungated].

7. Thursday, January 25: *Sub-national Governments and Decentralization*

Reading: Faguet, Jean-Paul. (2014), *Decentralization and Governance*, *World Development*, 53, 2–13 [gated] [ungated]

8. Tuesday, January 30: *The Demand Side of Electoral Politics: Voters*

Reading: Blais, A. (2006), *What Affects Voter Turnout?*, *Annual Review of Political Science*, 9, 111–125 [gated]

9. Thursday, February 01: *The Supply Side of Electoral Politics: Politicians*

Reading: Besley, T. (2005), *Political Selection*, *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 19 (3), 43–60 [gated]

10. Tuesday, February 06: *Controlling Politicians: Electoral Accountability*

Reading: Ashworth, S. (2012), *Electoral Accountability: Recent Theoretical and Empirical Work*, *Annual Review of Political Science*, 15, 183–201 [gated] [ungated]

11. Thursday, February 08: MID-TERM EXAMINATION

PART II: INTRODUCTION TO THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF DEVELOPMENT

12. Tuesday, February 13: *Why Developing Countries? Why Politics?*

Reading: Banerjee, A. and Duflo, E. (2010), *The Economic Lives of the Poor*, Journal of Economic Perspectives, 21 (1), 141–168 [gated] [ungated]

13. Thursday, February 15: *State Formation and State Capacity*

Reading: Olson, M. (1993), *Dictatorship, Democracy, and Development*, American Political Science Review, 87 (3), 567 – 576 [gated]

14. Tuesday, February 20: *Foreign Influence: Past and Present*

Reading: Qian, N. (2015), *Making Progress on Foreign Aid*, Annual Review of Economics, 7, 277 – 308 [gated] [ungated]

15. Thursday, February 22: *Political Regimes and Development*

Reading: Mulligan, Casey, B., Ricard Gil, and Xavier Sala-i-Martin. 2004. *Do Democracies Have Different Public Policies than Nondemocracies?* Journal of Economic Perspectives, 18(1): 51–74 [gated]

16. Tuesday, February 27: *The Role of the Media in Politics*

Reading: Stromberg, D. (2015), *Media and Politics*, Annual Review of Economics, 7, 173–205 [ungated]

18. Thursday, March 1: *The “Political” Resource Curse*

Reading: Ross, M. (2015), *What Have We Learned about the Resource Curse?*, Annual Review of Political Science, 18, 239–259 [ungated]

19. Tuesday, March 6: *When It All Breaks Down: Civil Conflict*

Reading: Collier, P. and Elliott, V. and Hegre, H. and Hoeffler, A. and Reynal-Querol, M. and Sambanis, N. (2003), *Breaking the Conflict Trap: Civil War and Development Policy* (chapters 1,3 and 5), The World Bank and Oxford University Press [ungated]

20. Thursday, March 8: *Case Study: The Democratic Republic of the Congo*

Reading: Trapido, J. (2015), *Africa’s Leaky Giant*, New Left Review, 92 [ungated]