SS 202b: Political Institutions

Winter 2018–19
Thursday, 1:00pm to 4:00pm
Baxter 237

Jonathan N. Katz
Baxter Hall, Rm 325
x4191
jkatz@caltech.edu

Purpose

The purpose of this course is to familiarize the students with the various literatures on political institutions from a political economy perspective. Of course, we will cover only a small fraction of the large literature of the topic.

Course Requirements and Grading Policies

The course is organized as a seminar. That means all students are expected to have read all of the materials for the week a be prepared to discuss them.

In terms of written assignments you must write four (4) short response paper of approximately three to five pages each on a give week’s readings. These response papers are to critically analyze the weeks readings; it is not just to be a summary or book report. These papers must be turned in by Friday at 5:00pm PST of the week the readings come from. All required materials should be emailed to me at jkatz@caltech.edu by their respective due dates. There are no exceptions to these deadlines, and written work that is not turned in by these dates and times will not be graded nor receive any credit.

Finally, each student is required to be a discussion leader for at least three of the weekly meetings. Students can co-lead with one other student for two of their lead sessions. As discussion leader, the student will produce a written summary of the readings and topics for the week, and will develop an agenda for discussing the course materials. These summaries will be distributed to the other students in class for their reference.

Grades for the course will be based on performance in class (20%), discussion leadership (20%), response papers (40%), and the final written exam (20%).
Schedule
Week 1: Course Introduction.

Week 2: Reasoning and Rationality.

Required:

Week 3: Institutions.

Required:

Week 4: Elections I.

Required:

Week 5: Elections II.

Required:


Week 6: Organization of Legislatures.

Required:


Week 7: Legislative Parties.

Required:


Week 8: Parliaments/Multi-Party Systems I

Required:


Week 9: Parliaments/Multi-Party Systems II

Required:


Week 10: Bureaucracy and Courts:

Required:


