Economics 109
Political Economy
Fall 2026

Professor:

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Office Hours: Thursday 4 to 5pm

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Monday 11am to 12pm, Evans 630

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Office Hours: Thursday 5:30 to 7:30pm, Evans 630

Prerequisites: Econ 1 or 2, and Math 51 and 52.

Course Outline:

This course will provide a broad introduction to political economy, going over both theoretical and empirical questions as well as research methods. The class will devote specific attention to electoral democracies, and in particular the United States and the 2026 midterms, where each student will build an election forecast model. The class will also introduce students to historical political economy and comparative political economy. The class will cover a wide range of topics: collective choice, voting behavior, turnout, disenfranchisement, civil rights, candidates' and politicians' behavior and accountability, political selection, money and politics, climate and politics, protests, news media and social media, and institutions.

Enrollment Questions:

If you have enrollment questions please carefully review the Economics Department's Enrollment page: https://econ.berkeley.edu/courses/course-enrollment-policies. If your question is not addressed on this page, please email the Department of Economics Head GSI at headgsi@econ.berkeley.edu. If you are a concurrent enrollment student, you should email jillian.tracy@berkeley.edu.

Lectures:

Lectures will be held in person in Dwinelle 0145 on Tuesday 5-8pm.

Lecture participation will factor into the course grade (see grading rubric and discussion of class participation below).

Discussion Sections:

- Monday 12-1pm Dwinelle 243
- Monday 5-6pm Social Sciences Building 185
- Tuesday 9-10am Morgan Hall 109
- Tuesday 4-5pm Social Sciences Building 136
- Thursday 5-6pm Wheeler Hall 202
- Thursday 7-7pm Wheeler Hall 202

Discussion sections serve three purposes:

1) Review key concepts from lecture and address remaining questions
2) Go over solutions to problem sets
3) Introduction to statistical programming and empirical methods used in economics

Discussion section attendance is not mandatory, but highly encouraged. Discussion section participation will factor into the course grade.

Grading:

- Problem Sets: 15%
- Student Election Prediction: 15%
- Midterm Exam: 30%
- Final Exam: 30%
- Class Participation 10%

Problem Sets:

There will be 4 problem sets. No late problem sets will be accepted. You can work in groups up to three students on problem sets but each student needs to submit their own problem set. You should write the names of the other students you have worked with.

Problem sets can be done in either R, Stata or Python.
R can be freely downloaded here: https://www.rstudio.com/
Python can be freely downloaded here: https://www.python.org/downloads/
Several GSI sections covering Python basics will be held before the first empirical problem set (PS2) is due.

The GSIs and I will only answer clarifying questions about the problem sets (on Ed Discussion).

One Dropped Problem Set:

You are allowed to miss one problem set. I.e., your grade will be determined by the best three grades you get on the problem sets.

Student Election Prediction:

Each student will work on an election prediction exercise related to the 2026 midterms, focusing on a House, Senate, or Gubernatorial race. The project will consist of a prediction exercise requiring students to collect, process, and analyze multi-level datasets, including past election results, voter demographics, campaign contributions, candidate positions, and polls.

Students will write a summary of their prediction model. Half a class will be devoted to students' presentations of their election prediction model on October 27, 2026. After the election, each student will assess the performance of their model prediction with the realized election results and write a report.

For both the summary of the prediction and the report, no late submissions will be accepted.

Midterm Exam:

The class will have one midterm exam, which will be held on Oct 20, 2026 during class time. If you cannot make it to the midterm exam, you cannot take the class.

Any cheating on a midterm will lead to an F in the class and will be reported to the Center for Student Conduct.

Final Exam:

The final exam will be a comprehensive written exam held for 3 hours in person on Dec 17, 2026 from 11:30am-2:30pm in the lecture hall (and extra rooms as needed). If you cannot make it to the final exam, you cannot take the class.

Any cheating on the final will lead to an F in the class and will be reported to the Center for Student Conduct.

Attendance Policy:

Attendance is not strictly required, and there is no direct penalty for absences. However, participation will be assessed through in-class activities during lectures and discussion sections.

Class Participation

The class participation grade is based on engagement during lectures and discussion sections. This includes working on questions in small groups, occasionally presenting the conclusions of group discussions to the class, and responding to *Poll Everywhere* questions during lectures.

Course Communication:

Most course-related communication should take place through **Ed Discussion**. Questions about problem sets, course material, and exams should generally be asked publicly so that other students can benefit from the answers. Answers or solutions to problem sets should **not** be shared on Ed Discussion. Questions of a personal or individual nature can be submitted privately to the GSIs or instructor through Ed Discussion.

We will generally respond to questions on Ed Discussion within 48 hours. Questions about problem sets or exams submitted less than 48 hours before the relevant deadline or exam may not receive a response in time.

Email should **only** be used for matters that cannot reasonably be handled through Ed Discussion. Responses to email may take longer than responses on Ed Discussion.

<u>Grading Disputes:</u>

Grading disputes must be submitted to the GSI who graded the assignment in writing through email. All grading disputes must be submitted within one week from the date the graded assignment or exam was returned to the class. Please be specific in describing why you think there was a grading error, and why you believe you deserve a different score. Once they do re-grade a problem set or exam, the GSI may choose to re-grade the entire assignment (not just the problem in question), which of course may result in a higher or lower overall score.

<u>Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence:</u>

Tools based on generative artificial intelligence (such as ChatGPT) are now commonly used in academic work, particularly for statistical programming, and students may use them to help check their code. When doing so, the relevant lines of code must be clearly marked with a comment indicating that AI assistance was used (e.g., "## code developed with assistance from ChatGPT").

Relying on an AI system to write code can interfere with students' understanding and is often counterproductive, so these tools should be used sparingly. While standard tools such as spell-checkers or grammar checkers are acceptable, the use of generative AI tools (including ChatGPT) for writing is considered academic dishonesty and is strictly prohibited.

Tutoring Resources:

The Department of Economics Tutoring webpage offers information on tutoring options for students.

Class Polices

Berkeley Honor Code: The student community at U.C. Berkeley has adopted the following Honor Code: "As a member of the U.C. Berkeley community, I act with honesty, integrity, and respect for others." I expect all students and instructors to adhere to this code at all times.

Academic Honesty Policy: Cheating will be harshly punished. Cheating on an assignment will result in a score of zero on the assignment and a grade of "F" for the course if repeated. Cheating on a midterm or the final exam will result in a grade of "F" for the course. Cheating includes, but is not limited to, violating exam instructions, using written or electronic materials during an exam, communicating with another person about the exam or course material during an exam, copying off another person's exam or assignment, allowing someone to copy off of your exam or assignment, having someone take an exam or assignment for you, changing an exam answer after an exam is graded, and plagiarizing written or other materials. Incidents of cheating are reported to Center for Student Conduct, which administers additional punishment. See also https://conduct.berkeley.edu/.

Special Accommodations: If you require disability-related or religious accommodations for exams or lecture, if you have emergency medical information that you wish to share, or if you need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please email or speak with me or your GSI as soon as possible. You can obtain information about accommodations at the Academic Accommodations Hub. For disability-related accommodations, at least two (2) weeks before an exam, you must also obtain a Letter of Accommodation (LOA) from Disabled Students' Program (http://dsp.berkeley.edu) which they send electronically to me and the GSI's. DSP's Proctoring Service requires notice of participants at least two weeks in advance of an exam. Accommodations are not offered retroactively.

Limits to Confidentiality: As University of California employees, all course instructors are Responsible Employees and we are required to report incidents and information provided to us about sexual violence, harassment, or other conduct prohibited by university policy. We cannot keep such information confidential, but the Title IX officer will consider requests for confidentiality. There are confidential resources available, including the CARE Advocate Office (https://care.berkeley.edu/get-resources/).

Classroom Etiquette: Laptops are not permitted during lecture, except for students with approved accommodations. Tablets may be used for note-taking. Please do not use social media, email, or other applications unrelated to class during lecture. These activities are distracting both to you and to those around you. I will try to keep lectures interactive, and having an attentive and engaged classroom is important to making that work.

Recommended Textbooks:

Political Economy for Public Policy, Ethan Bueno de Mesquita, Princeton University Press, 2016.

Political Economics. Explaining Economic Policy, Torsten Persson and Guido Tabellini, MIT Press, 2002.

Readings:

There will be assigned readings each week. Carefully completing the assigned readings is a necessary part of succeeding in this class. Assigned textbook chapters should be read in full. Assigned research papers should also be fully understood, which typically requires reading carefully the introduction and going through all figures, tables, and empirical sections. Readings can be found linked below, on bcourses, or in the textbooks. During the first classes, we will discuss recommended strategies for reading an empirical research paper in economics.

- Readings marked by a * are required.
- Readings marked by a (*) are encouraged.
- Other readings are optional "background reading." The syllabus has a large number of such readings. I have listed them here so that students can read more about the topics that interest them. Reading everything on the syllabus during the semester is, however, likely to be overambitious.

Week 1 (09/01/2026)

- **Introduction: what is Political Economy?**
- **Normative Frameworks: utilitarianism and egalitarianism**
- **Limits of Collective Choice**
    - **Aggregation of preferences**
    - **Arrow's impossibility theorem**
    - **Condorcet Winner and Condorcet Paradox**

Readings:

* Bonica, A., McCarty, N., Poole, K. T., & Rosenthal, H. (2013). Why hasn't democracy slowed rising inequality? Journal of Economic Perspectives, 27(3), 103-124.

* *Political economy for public policy*, Ethan Bueno de Mesquita, Princeton University Press, 2016. Chapters 1 and 2

(*) Maskin, Eric. "*The Arrow Impossibility Theorem: Where Do We Go From Here?"* Institute for Advanced Study, School of Social Science, Economics Paper No. 93, 2009, available here.

Theories of Distributive Justice, John E. Roemer, Harvard University Press, 1996.

Equality of What? Amartya Sen, Tanner Lecture on Human Values, 1979, available here.

Arrow, K. J. (2020). Social choice and individual values. Barakaldo Books.

Section:

- Review of key mathematical concepts
- Review of class materials

Week 2 (09/08/2026)

- **Pareto optimality**
- **Single-peaked preferences and Median Voter Theorem**
- **Equity, Redistribution and Trade**

* *Political economy for public policy*, Ethan Bueno de Mesquita, Princeton University Press, 2016. Chapter 3

* Rodrik, D. (1998). Why do more open economies have bigger governments?. Journal of political economy, 106(5), 997-1032.

(*) Black, D. (1948). On the rationale of group decision-making. Journal of political economy, 56(1), 23-34.

(*) Meltzer, A. H., & Richard, S. F. (1981). A rational theory of the size of government. Journal of political Economy, 89(5), 914-927.

(*) Roemer, J. E. (1998). Why the poor do not expropriate the rich: an old argument in new garb. Journal of Public Economics, 70(3), 399-424.

Alesina, A., & Rodrik, D. (1994). Distributive politics and economic growth. The quarterly journal of economics, 109(2), 465-490.

Autor, D., Dorn, D., Hanson, G., & Majlesi, K. (2020). Importing political polarization? The electoral consequences of rising trade exposure. American Economic Review, 110(10), 3139-3183.

Choi, J., Kuziemko, I., Washington, E., & Wright, G. (2024). Local economic and political effects of trade deals: Evidence from NAFTA. American Economic Review, 114(6), 1540-1575.

Kuziemko, I., Longuet-Marx, N., & Naidu, S. (2023). "Compensate the Losers?" Economic policy and partisan realignment in the US (No. w31794). National Bureau of Economic Research.

Methods:

- Causality vs. correlation
- Natural experiments
- Reading an empirical paper in economics

Section:

- Review of class materials
- Introduction to programming on R/Stata/Python (I)

Week 3 (09/15/2026)

- **Who do voters support and why?**
- **Turnout and voting costs**
- **Expressive and strategic voting**

First Problem Set due.

Readings:

* Coate, S., Conlin, M., & Moro, A. (2008). The performance of pivotal-voter models in small-scale elections: Evidence from Texas liquor referenda. Journal of Public Economics, 92(3-4), 582-596.

* DellaVigna, S., List, J. A., Malmendier, U., & Rao, G. (2016). Voting to tell others. The Review of Economic Studies, 84(1), 143-181.

* Gerber, A. S., Green, D. P., & Larimer, C. W. (2008). Social pressure and voter turnout: Evidence from a large-scale field experiment. American political Science review, 102(1), 33-48.

(*) Pons, Vincent (2018). "Will a five-minute discussion change your mind? A countrywide experiment on voter choice in France." American Economic Review 108(6): 1322-63.

(*) Spenkuch, J. L. (2018). Expressive vs. strategic voters: An empirical assessment. Journal of Public Economics, 165, 73-81.

(*) Washington, Ebonya (2006) "How Black Candidates Affect Voter Turnout," Quarterly Journal of Economics 121(3): pp. 973-998.

Bursztyn, Leonardo, Davide Cantoni, Patricia Funk, and Noam Yuchtman (2017). Polls, the press, and political participation: The effects of anticipated election closeness on voter turnout.

Coate, S., & Conlin, M. (2004). A group rule—utilitarian approach to voter turnout: Theory and evidence. American Economic Review, 94(5), 1476-1504.

Gerber, A. S., Green, D. P., & Shachar, R. (2003). Voting may be habit-forming: evidence from a randomized field experiment. American journal of political science, 47(3), 540-550.

Gerber, Alan, Hoffman, Mitchell, Morgan, Jogn and Raymond, Collin (2019) - "One in a Million: Field Experiments on Perceived Closeness of the Election and Voter Turnout".

Kalla, J. L., & Broockman, D. E. (2018). The minimal persuasive effects of campaign contact in general elections: Evidence from 49 field experiments. *American Political Science Review*, *112*(1), 148-166.

Nickerson, D. W. (2008). Is voting contagious? Evidence from two field experiments. *American political Science review*, 102(1), 49-57.

Pons, V., & Tricaud, C. (2018). Expressive voting and its cost: Evidence from runoffs with two or three candidates. *Econometrica*, 86(5), 1621-1649.

Methods:
- Randomized Control Trials

Section:
- Introduction to programming on R/Stata/Python (II)

Week 4 (09/22/2026)
- **Voting rights and Civil Rights**
- **Disenfranchisement and expansion of the electorate**
- **Gerrymandering**

Readings:

* Cascio, Elizabeth and Ebonya Washington (2014) “Valuing the Vote: the Redistribution of Voting Rights and State Funds Following the Voting Rights Act of 1965” *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 379–433.

* Jones, D. B., Troesken, W., & Walsh, R. (2012). A poll tax by any other name: The political economy of disenfranchisement (No. w18612). National Bureau of Economic Research.

* Lott, John R., Jr. and Lawrence W. Kenny (1999) “Did Women’s Suffrage Change the Size and Scope of Government?” Journal of Political Economy 107(6): 1163-1198.

(*) Acemoglu, D., & Robinson, J. A. (2000). Why did the West extend the franchise? Democracy, inequality, and growth in historical perspective. *The quarterly journal of economics*, *115*(4), 1167-1199.

(*) Bernini, A., Facchini, G., Tabellini, M., & Testa, C. (2024). Sixty years of the Voting Rights Act: progress and pitfalls. Oxford Review of Economic Policy, 40(3), 486-497.

Bernini, A., Facchini, G., Tabellini, M., & Testa, C. (2025). Black empowerment and white mobilization: the effects of the Voting Rights Act. Journal of Political Economy, 133(10), 3078-3131.

Cantoni, Enrico, and Vincent Pons. "Strict ID laws don’t stop voters: Evidence from a US nationwide panel, 2008–2018." *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 136.4 (2021): 2615-2660.

Husted, Thomas and Lawrence Kenny (1997). ‘The Effect of the Expansion of the Voting Franchise on the Size of Government”, Journal of Political Economy, 105(1), 54-81.

Kuziemko, I., & Washington, E. (2018). Why did the Democrats lose the South? Bringing new data to an old debate. American Economic Review, 108(10), 2830-2867.

Miller, G. (2008). Women's suffrage, political responsiveness, and child survival in American history. The quarterly journal of economics, 123(3), 1287-1327.

Naidu, S. (2012). Suffrage, schooling, and sorting in the post-bellum US South (No. w18129). National Bureau of Economic Research.

Ricca, F., & Trebbi, F. (2022). Minority underrepresentation in US cities (No. w29738). Cambridge: National Bureau of Economic Research.

Methods:

- Difference in Difference and Event study frameworks

Section:

- Review of class materials
- Introduction to programming on R/Stata/Python (III): Maps and Graphs

Week 5 (09/29/2026)

- **Political preferences**
- **Revealed vs. stated preferences, surveys and survey experiments**
- **Group voting**
- **Realignment**

Second problem set due

Readings:

* Funk, Patricia. "How accurate are surveyed preferences for public policies? Evidence from a unique institutional setup." Review of Economics and Statistics 98.3 (2016): 442-454.

* Kuziemko, I., Norton, M. I., Saez, E., & Stantcheva, S. (2015). How elastic are preferences for redistribution? Evidence from randomized survey experiments. American Economic Review, 105(4), 1478-1508.

* *Political Economics. Explaining Economic Policy,* Torsten Persson and Guido Tabellini, MIT Press, 2002. Chapter 8

(*) Bragheiri, Luca and Sarah Eichmeyer (2025) - Learning from the Past: How History Education Shapes Support for Extreme Ideology

(*) Cantoni, E., & Pons, V. (2022). Does context outweigh individual characteristics in driving voting behavior? Evidence from relocations within the United States. *American Economic Review*, *112*(4), 1226-1272.

(*) Gethin, A., Martínez-Toledano, C., & Piketty, T. (2022). Brahmin left versus merchant right: Changing political cleavages in 21 western democracies, 1948–2020. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, *137*(1), 1-48.

(*) Hall, A. B. (2015). What happens when extremists win primaries?. *American Political Science Review*, 109(1), 18-42.

Alesina, Alberto, and Nicola Fuchs-Schndeln (2007), Good-Bye Lenin (or Not?): The Effect of Communism on Peoples Preferences," American Economic Review, 97(4), 1507-28.

Alesina, Alberto, Armando Miano, and Stefanie Stantcheva. "Immigration and redistribution." The Review of Economic Studies 90, no. 1 (2023): 1-39.

Barber, M., & Pope, J. C. (2019). Does party trump ideology? Disentangling party and ideology in America. American Political Science Review, 113(1), 38-54.

Beaman, L., Chattopadhyay, R., Duflo, E., Pande, R., & Topalova, P. (2009). Powerful women: does exposure reduce bias?. Quarterly Journal of Economics, 124(4), 1497-1540.

Davide Cantoni, Yuy Chen, David Yang and Noam Yuchtman (2018). “Curriculum and Ideology.” Journal of Political Economy, 125 (2), 338-392.

Dhar, D. Jain, D. Jayachandran, S. (2020) - Reshaping Adolescents’ Gender Attitudes: Evidence from a School-Based Experiment in India

Luttmer, Erzo F.P. (2001) “Group Loyalty and the Taste for Redistribution”, Journal of Political Economy, 109 (3): 6-34

Manacorda, Marco, Edward Miguel, and Andrea Vigorito. (2011). “Government Transfers and Political Support”, American Economic Journal: Applied Economics, 3(3), 1-28.

Mullainathan, Sendhil and Ebonya Washington (2009), Sticking with Your Vote: Cognitive Dissonance and Political Attitudes," American Economic Journal: Applied Economics, Vol. 1(1), 86-111.

Navajas, Gabriela Ertola, Paula A. López Villalba, Martín A. Rossi, and Antonia Vazquez (2020). "The Long-Term Effect of Military Conscription on Personality and Beliefs.": Review of Economics and Statistics. 1-34.

Methods:

- Survey experiments

Section:

- Review of class materials
- Potential Outcomes Framework

Week 6 (10/06/2026)

Politicians: competition, representation and ideology

- **Hotelling-Downs framework**
- **Probabilistic Voting**
- **Measuring ideology**
- **Polarization**

Readings:

* *Political Economics. Explaining Economic Policy,* Torsten Persson and Guido Tabellini, MIT Press, 2002. Chapter 3

* Funke, M., Schularick, M., & Trebesch, C. (2023). Populist leaders and the economy. American Economic Review, 113(12), 3249-3288.

* Lee, David, Enrico Moretti and Matthew Butler (2004). “Do Voters Affect or Elect Policies? Evidence from the US House.” Quarterly Journal of Economics, 807-859.

(*) Bertrand and Kamenica (2018) - Coming Apart - Cultural Distances in the US Over Time

(*) Gentzkow, Matthew (2016) - Polarization in 2016. Toulouse Network for Information Technology Whitepaper

(*) Di Tella, Rafael, Randy Kotti, Caroline Le Pennec, and Vincent Pons. "Keep your enemies closer: strategic platform adjustments during US and French elections." American Economic Review 115, no. 8 (2025): 2488-2528.

(*) *Political Economics. Explaining Economic Policy,* Torsten Persson and Guido Tabellini, MIT Press, 2002. Chapters 1 and 2

Patrick Balles, Ulrich Matter, Alois Stutzer, Special Interest Groups Versus Voters and the Political Economics of Attention, *The Economic Journal*, Volume 134, Issue 662, August 2024, Pages 2290–2320,

Boxell, Levi, Gentzkow, Matthew, Shapiro, Jesse (2020) - Cross-country trends in affective polarization

Canen, Nathan, Kendall, Chad, and Francesco Trebbi. 2020. Unbundling Polarization. Econometrica, 88(3), 1197-1233.

Clinton, Joshua, Simon Jackman, and Douglas Rivers. "The statistical analysis of roll call data." American Political Science Review (2004): 355-370.

Dal Bo’, Ernesto, Fred Finan, Olle Folke, Torsten Persson and Johanna Rickne. 2018 “Economic Losers and Political Winners: Sweden's Radical Right”

Desmet, Klaus, and Romain Wacziarg (2018). The cultural divide.

Gerber, Elisabeth R., and Jeffrey B. Lewis (2014). "Beyond the median: Voter preferences, district heterogeneity, and political representation." Journal of Political Economy 112 (6): 1364-1383

Guiso, Luigi and Herrera, Helios and Morelli, Massimo, Demand and Supply of Populism.

Guriev, S., & Papaioannou, E. (2022). The political economy of populism. Journal of Economic literature, 60(3), 753-832.

Levitt, S. D. (1996). How do senators vote? disentangling the role of voter preferences, party affiliation, and senator ideology. American Economic Review, 86(3):425–441.

McCarty, Nolan, Keith T. Poole, and Howard Rosenthal. Polarized America: The dance of ideology and unequal riches. MIT Press, 2006. Chapter 2.

Moskowitz, Daniel J., Jon C. Rogowski, and James M. Snyder. "Parsing Party Polarization in Congress." (2018).

Methods:

- Spatial voting models

Section:

- Text as data methods

Week 9 (10/13/2026)

Third problem set due

- **Money in Politics**
- **Campaign and Advertising**
- **Lobbying**

* Ansolabehere, Stephen, John de Figueriredo and James Snyder (2002). “Why is there So Little Money in Politics?” *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 17, 1, 105-130.

* Bertrand, Marianne, Matilde Bombardini, Ray Fisman, and Francesco Trebbi (2020) “Tax-Exempt Lobbying: Corporate Philanthropy as a Tool for Political Influence”. *American Economic Review* 110(70), 2065-2102

(*) Allcott, H., Gentzkow, M., Levy, R. E., Crespo-Tenorio, A., Dumas, N., Mason, W., ... & Tucker, J. A. (2025). The Effects of Political Advertising on Facebook and Instagram before the 2020 US Election (No. w33818). National Bureau of Economic Research.

(*) Bonica, A. (2014). Mapping the ideological marketplace. American Journal of Political Science, 58(2), 367-386.

(*) Finan, F., & Schechter, L. (2012). Vote-buying and reciprocity. Econometrica, 80(2), 863-881.

(*) Spenkuch, Jörg L., and David Toniatti. "Political advertising and election results." The Quarterly Journal of Economics 133, no. 4 (2018): 1981-2036.

Avis, E., Ferraz, C., Finan, F., & Varjão, C. (2017). Money and politics: The effects of campaign spending limits on political competition and incumbency advantage (No. w23508). National Bureau of Economic Research.

Battaglini, M., Sciabolazza, V. L., Lin, M., & Patacchini, E. (2024). Unobserved contributions and political influence: Evidence from the death of top donors (No. w32649). National Bureau of Economic Research.

Blanes I Vidal, Jordi, Mirko Draca and Christian Fons-Roen (2012). “Revolving Door Lobbyists.” American Economic Review, 102, 7, 3731-3748.

Bertrand, Marianne, Matilde Bombardini and Francesco Trebbi (2014). “Is it Whom You Know or What You Know? An Empirical Assessment of the Lobbying Process.” American Economic Review, 104, 12, 3885-3920.

Bombardini, Matilde and Francesco Trebbi, "Empirical Models of Lobbying," Annual Review of Economics, Forthcoming.

Bouton, L., Cagé, J., Dewitte, E., & Pons, V. (2022). Small campaign donors (No. w30050). National Bureau of Economic Research.

Coppock, A., Green, D. P., & Porter, E. (2022). Does digital advertising affect vote choice? Evidence from a randomized field experiment. Research & Politics, 9(1), 20531680221076901.

Fowler, Erika Franklin, Michael M. Franz, Gregory J. Martin, Zachary Peskowitz, and Travis N. Ridout. (2021). Political advertising online and offline. American Political Science Review, 115(1), 130-149.

Gene, G., & Helpman, E. (1994). Protection for sale. American Economic Review, 84(4), 833-50.

Sides, J., Vavreck, L., & Warshaw, C. (2021). The effect of television advertising in united states elections. American Political Science Review, 1-17.

Section:

- Review of class materials
- Collecting and processing campaign contributions

Week 8 (10/20/2026)**: Midterm**

Week 9 (10/27/2026)

- **Student Election Predictions: students present their election prediction**
- **Discussion of polls and surveys // aggregating errors**

Student Election Prediction due.

Readings:

* Gelman, Andrew. "Failure and success in political polling and election forecasting." *Statistics and Public Policy* 8.1 (2021): 67-72.

* Look at: https://github.com/elliottmorris/toy-us-election-simulator

* https://data4democracy.substack.com/p/do-moderates-do-better

* https://split-ticket.org/2025/08/15/deconstructing-war/

Gelman, A., & King, G. (1993). Why are American presidential election campaign polls so variable when votes are so predictable?. *British Journal of Political Science*, *23*(4), 409-451.

Shirani-Mehr, Houshmand, et al. "Disentangling bias and variance in election polls." *Journal of the American Statistical Association* 113.522 (2018): 607-614.

Week 10 (11/03/2026 – Election Day!)

- **Non-policy attributes of politicians**
- **Politicians' effectiveness**
- **Citizen-candidate models**
- **Political selection**

* Chattopadhyay, Raghabendra and Esther Duflo (2004). "Women as Policymakers: Evidence from a Randomized Policy Experiment in India." *Econometrica*¸72, 5, 1409-1443.

* Jones, B. F., & Olken, B. A. (2005). Do leaders matter? National leadership and growth since World War II. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, *120*(3), 835-864.

* Washington, E. L. (2008). Female socialization: How daughters affect their legislator fathers. *American Economic Review*, 98(1):311-32.

(*) Benjamin Marx, Vincent Pons, Vincent Rollet, Electoral Turnovers, The Review of Economic Studies, Volume 92, Issue 5, October 2025, Pages 3306–3339

(*) Dal Bó, Ernesto & Frederico Finan (2018) - "Progress and Perspectives in the Study of Political Selection". Annual Review of Economics 10(18): 541-575

(*) Ferreira, F., & Gyourko, J. (2009). Do political parties matter? Evidence from US cities. The Quarterly journal of economics, 124(1), 399-422.

(*) Green, D. P., Hyman-Metzger, O., Sood, G., & Zee, M. A. (2024). Revisiting a Natural Experiment: Do Legislators With Daughters Vote More Liberally on Women's Issues?.

Besley, T., & Coate, S. (1997). An economic model of representative democracy. The quarterly journal of economics, 112(1), 85-114.

Besley, T., O. Folke, T. Persson, and J. Rickne (2017). "Gender quotas and the crisis of the mediocre man: Theory and evidence from Sweden." American Economic Review 107(8), 2204–42.

Canen, N., Jackson, M. O., & Trebbi, F. (2022). Social interactions and legislative activity. Journal of the European Economic Association.

Hilfiger, Nathaniel, Eoin McGuirk and Nicolas Miller (2017). "No Kin in the Game: Moral Hazard and War in the U.S. Congress."

Lidbom, Per Petterson (2008), "Do Parties Matter for Economic Outcomes: A Regression-Discontinuity Approach," Journal of the European Economic Association, 6 (5), 1037-1056, 2008.

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Pande, Rohini (2011) - Can Informed Voters Enforce Better Governance? Experiments in Low Income Democracies. Annual Review of Economics, 3: 215-237

Methods:

- Regression Discontinuity Designs

Section:

- Review of Class Materials
- Regression and prediction exercises

Week 11 (11/10/2026) : Guest Lecture: Edgard Dewitte

- **Climate and Politics**

* Dechezleprêtre, A., Fabre, A., Kruse, T., Planterose, B., Sanchez Chico, A., & Stantcheva, S. (2025). Fighting climate change: International attitudes toward climate policies. American Economic Review, 115(4), 1258-1300.

* Hsiang, Solomon M., Marshall Burke and Edward Miguel (2013). "Quantifying the Influence of Climate on Human Conflict." Science 341 (6151): 1235367.

(*) Schneider, S. A., & Kunze, S. (2025). Disastrous discretion: Political bias in relief allocation varies substantially with disaster severity. Review of Economics and Statistics, 107(5), 1448-1459.

(*) Bergquist, P., & Warshaw, C. (2019). Does global warming increase public concern about climate change?. The Journal of Politics, 81(2), 686-691.

Besley, T., & Persson, T. (2023). The political economics of green transitions. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 138(3), 1863-1906.

Bombardini, M., Finan, F., Longuet-Marx, N., Naidu, S., & Trebbi, F. (2025). Climate Politics in the United States (No. w34120). National Bureau of Economic Research.

Deryugina, T. (2013). How do people update? The effects of local weather fluctuations on beliefs about global warming. Climatic change, 118(2), 397-416.

Kaplan, E., Spenkuch, J. L., & Yuan, H. (2025). Pandering in the Shadows: How Natural Disasters Affect Special Interest Politics. American Economic Journal: Economic Policy, 17(3), 441-470.

List, J. A., & Sturm, D. M. (2006). How elections matter: Theory and evidence from environmental policy. The Quarterly Journal of Economics, 121(4), 1249-1281.

Djourelova, M., Durante, R., Motte, E., & Patacchini, E. (2023). Experience, narratives, and climate change beliefs. Available at SSRN 4680430.

Week 12 (11/17/2026)

- **Protests and social movement**

Student Post-Election Prediction Assessment due.

Readings:

* Cantoni, Davide, David Y. Yang, Noam Yuchtman, and Y. Jane Zhang (2019). “Protests as Strategic Games: Experimental Evidence from Hong Kong's Anti-Authoritarian Movement.” Quarterly Journal of Economics, 134(2) 1021-1077.

* Madestam, A., Shoag, D., Veuger, S., & Yanagizawa-Drott, D. (2013). Do political protests matter? evidence from the tea party movement. The Quarterly Journal of Economics, 128(4), 1633-1685.

* Gethin, A., & Pons, V. (2024). *Social movements and public opinion in the United States* (No. w32342). National Bureau of Economic Research.

Arias, E., Balán, P., Horacio, A. L., Marshall, J., & Querubin, P. (2019). How social networks help voters coordinate around information provision to improve electoral accountability: Evidence from Mexico. American Political Science Review, 113(2), 475-98.

Campante, F., Durante, R., & Sobbrio, F. (2018). Politics 2.0: The multifaceted effect of broadband internet on political participation. Journal of the European Economic Association, 16(4), 1094-1136.

Enikolopov, Ruben, Alexey Makarin, and Maria Petrova (2020). “Social Media and Protest Participation: Evidence from Russia.” Econometrica, 88(4), 1479-1514.

Manacorda, Marco and Andrea Tesei (2020). “Liberation Technology: Mobile Phones and Political Mobilization in Africa.” Econometrica, 88(2), 533-567.

Wasow, Omar (2020), “Agenda Seeding: How 1960s Black Protests Moved Elites, Public Opinion and Voting,” American Political Science Review, 1-22.

Section:

- Review of class materials
- Review of midterm exam

Week 13 (11/24/2026)

- **Culture, Institutions and democracy**

Readings:

* Acemoglu, D., Johnson, S., & Robinson, J. A. (2001). The colonial origins of comparative development: An empirical investigation. American economic review, 91(5), 1369-1401.

* Enke, B. (2020). Moral values and voting. *Journal of Political Economy*, *128*(10), 3679-3729.

* 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.

(*) Acemoglu, D., Naidu, S., Restrepo, P., & Robinson, J. A. (2019). Democracy does cause growth. Journal of political economy, 127(1), 47-100.
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Burgess, Robin, Remi Jedwab, Edward Miguel, Ameet Morjaria and Gerard Padró i Miguel (2013). "The Value of Democracy: Evidence from Road Building in Kenya." American Economic Review, 105, 6, 1817-51.

Dal Bó, Ernesto and Martín Rossi (2011). "Term Length and the Effort of Politicians." Review of Economic Studies, 78, 4, 1237-63.

Dal Bó, Pedro, Andrew Foster and Louis Putterman (2010). "Institutions and Behavior: Experimental Evidence on the Effects of Democracy." American Economic Review, 100, 2205-2229.

Francois, P., Rainer, I., & Trebbi, F. (2015). How is power shared in Africa?. Econometrica, 83(2), 465-503.

Hinnerich, Bjorn Tyrefors and Per Pettersson-Lidbom (2014), Democracy, Redistribution, and Political Participation: Evidence from Sweden 1919-1938," Econometrica, 82(3), 961-993.

Michalopoulos, S., & Papaioannou, E. (2016). The long-run effects of the scramble for Africa. American Economic Review, 106(7), 1802-1848.

Olken, Benjamin (2010). "Direct Democracy and Local Public Goods." American Political Science Review, 104, 2, 243-267.

Rodrik, D., Subramanian, A., & Trebbi, F. (2004). Institutions rule: the primacy of institutions over geography and integration in economic development. Journal of Economic Growth, 9(2), 131-165.

Methods:

- Confounders in cross-country regressions

Section:

- Review of class materials

Week 14 (12/01/2026)

- **Civil conflict and wars**

Fourth problem set due

Readings:

* Dube, O., & Vargas, J. F. (2013). Commodity price shocks and civil conflict: Evidence from Colombia. *Review of Economic studies*, *80*(4), 1384-1421.

* McGuirk, E., & Burke, M. (2020). The economic origins of conflict in Africa. *Journal of Political Economy*, *128*(10), 3940-3997.

* Dell, M., & Querubin, P. (2018). Nation building through foreign intervention: Evidence from discontinuities in military strategies. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, *133*(2), 701-764.

(*) Miguel, E., Satyanath, S., & Sergenti, E. (2004). Economic shocks and civil conflict: An instrumental variables approach. *Journal of political Economy*, *112*(4), 725-753.

(*) Nunn, Nathan and Nancy Qian (2014). "U.S. Food Aid and Civil Conflict," American Economic Review 104(6): 1630- 1666.

Armand, Alex, Paul Atwell, and Joseph F. Gomes (2020), "The Reach of Radio: Ending Civil Conflict through Rebel Demobilization," *American Economic Review*, 110(5), 1395-1429.

Dell, Melissa. 2015. "Trafficking Networks and the Mexican Drug War." *American Economic Review*, 105 (6): 1738-79.

Hsiang, Solomon M., Marshall Burke and Edward Miguel (2013). “Quantifying the Influence of Climate on Human Conflict.” *Science* 341 (6151): 1235367.

Jackson, Matthew O. and Massimo Morelli (2007). “Political Bias and War.” *American Economic Review* 97(4): 1353-1373.

Jha, S., & Shayo, M. (2019). Valuing peace: the effects of financial market exposure on votes and political attitudes. *Econometrica*, 87(5), 1561-1588.

Section:

- Review of class materials

Week 15 (12/08/2026)

- **News consumption**
- **Media slant**
- **Social media**

Readings:

* Martin, Gregory J., and Ali Yurukoglu (2017). "Bias in cable news: Persuasion and polarization." American Economic Review 107, no. 9: 2565-99.

* Gentzkow, Matthew and Jesse M. Shapiro (2011) - Ideological Segregation Online and Offline. The Quarterly Journal of Economics 126 (4): 1799–1839

* Snyder, J. M. and Stromberg, D. (2010), Press Coverage and Political Accountability," Journal of Political Economy, 118(2), 355-408

(*) Broockman, David, and Joshua Kalla. "Selective Exposure and Partisan Echo Chambers In Television News Consumption: Evidence from Linked Viewership, Administrative, and Survey Data." OSF Preprints. April 14 (2024).

(*) Chen, M. K., & Rohla, R. (2018). The effect of partisanship and political advertising on close family ties. Science, 360(6392), 1020-1024.

(*) Guriev, Sergei, Nikita Melnikov, Ekaterina Zhuravskaya (2021), 3G Internet and Confidence in Government, The Quarterly Journal of Economics, Volume 136, Issue 4, Pages 2533–2613

Allcott, Hunt, Luca Braghieri, Sarah Eichmeyer, & Matthew Gentzkow (2020) - The welfare effects of social media - American Economic Review, 110(3): 629-676

Cagé, J., Hervé, N., & Viaud, M. L. (2020). The production of information in an online world. *The Review of economic studies*, *87*(5), 2126-2164.

DellaVigna, S. and E. Kaplan (2007). The Fox News effect: Media bias and voting. Quarterly Journal of Economics 122(3), 807-860

DellaVigna, S., Durante, R., Knight, B., & La Ferrara, E. (2016). Market-based lobbying: Evidence from advertising spending in Italy. *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*, *8*(1), 224-256.

Djourelova, Milena. 2023. "Persuasion through Slanted Language: Evidence from the Media Coverage of Immigration." American Economic Review 113 (3): 800–835.

Durante, R., & Knight, B. (2012). Partisan control, media bias, and viewer responses: Evidence from Berlusconi's Italy. *Journal of the European Economic Association.* 10(3), 451-481.

Enikolopov, R., Petrova, M., & Sonin, K. (2018). Social media and corruption. American Economic Journal: Applied Economics, 10(1), 150-74.

Gentzkow, M., & Shapiro, J. M. (2010). What drives media slant? Evidence from US daily newspapers. Econometrica, 78(1), 35-71.

González-Bailón, S., Lazer, D., Barberá, P., Zhang, M., Allcott, H., Brown, T., ... & Tucker, J. A. (2023). Asymmetric ideological segregation in exposure to political news on Facebook. Science, 381(6656), 392-398.

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Groseclose, T., & Milyo, J. (2005). A measure of media bias. The quarterly journal of economics, 120(4), 1191-1237.

Huszár, F., Ktena, S. I., O'Brien, C., Belli, L., Schlaikjer, A., & Hardt, M. (2022). Algorithmic amplification of politics on Twitter. Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, 119(1).

Kennedy, P. J., & Prat, A. (2019). Where do people get their news? Economic Policy, 34(97), 5-47.

Levy, Ro'ee. "Social media, news consumption, and polarization: Evidence from a field experiment." (2021) American economic review 111, no. 3: 831-70.

Peterson, Erik, Sharad Goel, and Shanto Iyengar (2019). "Partisan selective exposure in online news consumption: Evidence from the 2016 presidential campaign." Political Science Research and Methods: 1-17.

Puglisi, R., & Snyder Jr, J. M. (2011). Newspaper coverage of political scandals. The Journal of Politics, 73(3), 931-950.

Methods:

- Instrumental Variables

Section:

- Review of class materials
- Prepare for final exam