

Comparative Political Economy  
Course Information  
Instructor: Jeremy Hunsinger  
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This is a course on Comparative Political Economy. More specifically, this course will deal with the political economy of the information society in terms of comparing the effects associated with the information society across a series of states. To do this we will read theoretical political economy and apply those theories to various countries.

The goals of this course, in turn, are to develop our knowledge of:

1. Basic concepts of political economy, such as wages, exchange, redistribution, money, ideology, etc.
2. The relationship between power, governments and economics,
3. The implications of the internet for political economics.

In addition to these goals, you should also acquire some sense of several different state systems and how they and their citizens are currently using the internet to further their goals

### **Books:**

Class Warfare in the Information Age, Perelman  
Future of Ideas, Lessig  
Rise of the Network Society 2nd Ed, Castells  
Virtuality Check, Fortier  
Theories of Political Economy, Caporaso  
A book of your choice, approved by the instructor

### **Grading:**

The format of this class is online. It is focussed on participation. Participation is 20% of the grade. Reading response/book review assignments are worth 30% of your final grade. There will be a project worth 50% of the grade. There will be extra credit on occasion, so watch for it.

Grading Policies:

6 short reading responses x 5 points a piece =30 points  
project 5 parts x 10 points each =50 points  
Participation =20 points  
Total Points =100 points

This is a difficult and demanding course, but its rewards can be quite significant – if you do the work. If you either are unwilling or unable to do the work, then do not remain enrolled. Political economy requires that one read and reflect critically in order to discuss their political claims, social implications, and moral ramifications of the various situations. You must give yourself

plenty of time to read and reflect on each individual assignment. Everyone is expected to do the assigned readings on time and in their entirety. Everyone also is expected to do additional outside work to become more informed about the life and times of the societies we will discuss. And, everyone is expected to participate eagerly and voluntarily in class discussions.

### **An Average Week:**

An average week in one my online courses starts on Friday, when you turn in the assignments for the week before and then you should look up the readings for the next week. Over the weekend you should be reading the assignment. You should be finished reading by Tuesday at the latest. Monday through Friday you should also be logging in at least once a day to participate in online discussions. I do not mean merely reading the discussions, I expect you to post high quality comments on the material of the course and to discuss these comments with others in the class. On Wednesday, you should begin drafting the answers for the weekly assignments. You can send me a first draft on Wednesday night by 7pm and I will return it the next morning by noon. However, I will not act as a copyeditor on your essays or drafts. I will only comment on the content and tell you what you should do to improve them. I suggest that you write at least two drafts of the essays before turning in a final draft on Friday. Turning in drafts is optional, but it helps some people. This is a general guideline, and you will have to modify this somewhat to fit the course you are taking as indicated in other sections.

## **Assignment descriptions:**

### **Schedule of Readings:**

This course is aimed to be more self-directed than usual courses. There are 5 books that are required. One book you can locate and choose on your own. So you must read 6 books in total.

Week 1: Read Theories of Political Economy.

Weeks 2 through 6: You can read any of the assigned books or the book you choose in any order. You should participate that week in the chat section of that area of the course.

You must read one book a week.

### **Reading Responses:**

All reading responses/book reviews are graded on a 5 point scale. Points are given out holistically, but focus on whether you demonstrate you have read and understand the readings. Points will be taken off for grammar, spelling, errors, and lack of citations. These are formal essays in that you have to cite the text appropriately and structure them accordingly, but you should relate them to your life and prior learning as appropriate. Reading responses should be about 500-1000 words and on average 750, certainly no more than 4 pages.

### **Project:**

The project has 5 parts that must be done in this order starting in week 2.

1. Generate a theme, idea, research subject.

Your theme should involve comparative research of the political economies of more than 2 countries of the world. only one of which can be in North America.

Your theme should involve the internet.

You should describe why you think this is important to study

You should include a description of the audience that you think would be interested in your study.

Some Possible themes:

Comparative Intellectual Property Policy dealing with Electronic Music

Development and Information Technology

Education and the Internet across Nations

2. Collect data on those countries.

you need 10 different sources minimally, 20 is ideal

no more than 5 sources can be on the internet

none of your sources can be an encyclopedia or factbook

the sources should be presented in a standard bibliographic format(APA, MPA, Chicago)

you should include a few sentences for each source which details why you are using it

3. Produce an abstract of your paper and an outline of your argument

the outline should be a formal outline

the abstract should contain your thesis statement

4. Produce a 1st draft of your paper

It should be no less than 8 pages long

It should contain citations

It should contain your full argument, but perhaps not all of your support. Where more support is needed, you should note that in the text.

5. Produce an executive summary of your full paper(which in theory is 20-50 pages long, but you don't have to write the full paper) which could be presented to(choose one) Congress, the

President, the Head of Sony Records . Because of the different audience, the presentation of this material will be and must be significantly different from part 4 of the assignment. The ability to construct and present things to different audiences is an important skill that you should be developing, and this will help you practice that skill.