"There is no such thing as a neutral education process. Education either functions as an instrument that is used to facilitate the integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity to it, or it becomes the "practice of freedom", the means by which the men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world." - P. Freire

Meeting places and times: 8-13:00 Saturday 3 January, then, M, T, W, Th, F, then Monday 12 January, T, W in Gruening 306

My contact information: My office hours are after class until 2pm in Gruening 602A or by appointment. My office telephone number is 907.474.2688. My email address is allovecraft@alaska.edu. I will usually respond within 24 hours during weekdays.

The purpose of this course: This course is a general introduction to the political economy of the United States. It explores the relationships between American economic interests and political behavior. The texts, lectures, videos and discussions critically examine the interests, attitudes, institutions, groups, and activities that shape the U.S. economy. The course also provides a solid foundation for understanding basic microeconomic and macroeconomic theories, regulatory issues, and American political behavior related to the economy. Ultimately, the course aims for you to be able to (1) perform a basic political analysis of economic issues and (2) understand your role as an economic, as well as political, citizen.

Required Texts:


There will also be readings on Blackboard. Do not fail to read these in a timely fashion. It is strongly suggested that you print out the Blackboard material and bring it to class, or have your notes from these readings in class. I will have some readings posted from the following books. If you want to buy them you can get them very cheap online so you don’t have to print out readings or read electronically.


The reading assignments listed in the course schedule are to have been read prior to class on the day they are noted. In other words, if I ask you about material from the texts you should either know it or be able to look it up in class quickly.

Electronic requirements: You are all required (as you are by UAF) to have UAF issued email addresses. These will be used to create access for you into this course’s Blackboard location. This website will post the assignments, course changes or updates, study hints, and any other information pertinent to the class. I will usually announce in class when an update is going to be online. If you do not have a computer at home – plan ahead. Ask for a hard copy of the information or simply use one of the many computer labs on campus to check Blackboard. In sum, it is your responsibility to furnish a UAF email address. It is your responsibility to check Blackboard for posted information. It is your responsibility to contact a Blackboard administrator if you are unable to access this information. In other words, do NOT wait until the night before the assignment is due to logon to Blackboard then remember you forgot to give me your UAF email address - you will not be given special consideration in such a case. I will check Blackboard, especially when study assignments are posted, to make sure that it is up and running. I will discuss how to access blackboard at the introduction. The website is: http://classes.uaf.edu this class is listed under its assigned CRN.

Course Structure and Requirements: Please read the requirements carefully. This course teaches the “nuts and bolts” of political economy in the United States as well as critical thinking skills about politics and economics in order to help you understand and evaluate economic issues and their relationships to the American political process. This means that in this course you will be expected to not only remember the material presented to you, but also manipulate this material in creative ways to answer questions posed about the subject material. Your grade in this course will be compiled from four exams, three assignments, and participation.

The grade breakdown: Exam 1 = 20%; Exam 2 = 20%; Exam 3 = 20%; Exam 4 (final exam) = 20%; Assignments 1, 2, 3, 4 = 5% each; TOTAL = 100%

The grade scale: 100-105 = A+; 100-90 = A; 89-80 = B; 79-70 = C; 69-60 = D; 59-0 = F. Grades that have fractions of points .5 or higher will be rounded up. In each category the plus and minus system is as follow 70-72= C-, 73-76= C, 77-79=C+. It is your responsibility to understand the grade required in this course for your own purposes – pride, completing a core course, major or minor requirement, and so forth.

Exams One, Two, and Three will test you on material covered up to that exam. These exams will be multiple choice and short answers. The fourth exam (taken in the finals period) will be the same but also have a comprehensive component as well. All the exam material will be drawn from the study questions posted on Blackboard. Pick up and read over your exams carefully. You have 10 days from the date the exam is handed back in class to dispute the grade on your exam.

Three assignments will be responses to video material - your responses to a set of questions and a short essay related to the material you watch in class. Any assignments turned in late will be docked 5 points for each day late – better to turn in late than never! The questions will be posted on Blackboard prior to class, it would be a good idea to bring a copy of them to class for the video viewing. There will also be one written assignment related to the politics of an economic issue of your choice. It is an “action exercise” where you will investigate an issue and write to your federal elected officials.
Each day you do not attend a minimum of three hours of the course you will lose 2pts of your final grade. So, if you more than twice fail to be present for at least three hours of the course you will lose all 5 points of your Attendance and Participation. Classroom attendance is highly recommended. Excessive absences invite academic problems or even failure because the assignments in this course stress material covered in the lectures and discussions as well as from the texts. Lecture days are your days to hear explanations of the course material and ask questions about what you have read and viewed. Paying attention to your colleagues’ questions, comments, and responses in class is advisable because these interactions often lead to clarification of material.

Should you be required to be away due to any University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF) sponsored events, job interviews, or medical emergencies you may receive an excused absence, provided you furnish documentation in order for me to consider your case. Absences will only be excused if you bring documentation for these absences. Only in cases of excused absences may assignments be turned in late. No make-up exam will be given once the next exam in the sequence is given.

There are no curves on any exam, quiz, or final grade. There is no extra credit. I do from time to time offer a few extra points on exams for current events knowledge – listen in class for these opportunities. However, I do take into account a student’s willingness to work hard, improve over time, and contribute to class discussion. At any time during the semester if you feel you are not performing at your desired level please feel free to contact your teaching assistant or me. The teaching assistant and I are here to help you perform well in the class – please come by to see us! Remember that the earlier you discuss your concerns with us, the better your chances will be to improve your performance in the course.

As described by UAF scholastic dishonesty constitutes a violation of the university rules and regulations and is punishable according to the procedures outlined by the UAF. Scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating on an exam, plagiarism, and collusion. Cheating includes providing answers to or taking answers from another student. Plagiarism includes use of another author’s words or arguments without attribution. Collusion includes unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing written work for fulfillment of any course requirement. Scholastic dishonesty can be punishable by your removal from the course and a grade of F; dishonesty may be reported to the UAF administration. Please see the UAF code of conduct for more information. It is located in the UAF course catalog and available on the university website. http://www.uaf.edu/catalog/current/academics/regs3.html

At UAF the Office of Disability Services implements the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). I provide reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. You can contact the Office in 208 WHIT at Tel: 474.5655 TTY: 474.1827.

At UAF the Veterans Service Office can be of assistance to those of you in transition. The office is generally staffed M-F during business hours 11 Eielson Building 907-474-2475.

Leaving the Course
I do not automatically withdraw students from this course. In other words, if you disappear in the middle of the course and earn a “F” because you have not taken exams or completed assignments you will receive an “F” (not an incomplete) on the final grade roster. I will not issue any incompletes.
Students may withdraw through the sixth day of the course, January 9. This means you will be issued a “W” on your transcript which will not affect your GPA.

This syllabus is subject to change by the professor at any time during the semester. However, any changes will not result in more work than already scheduled for the students.

BRING THE READINGS ASSIGNED FOR THE DAY TO CLASS

The Making of Economic Society
Saturday 3 January
HM pages xxi-xxiii, Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, 5
Greek and Roman Slavery: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kqm8TdUVzCk
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cfv4YDggeSY
The Middle Ages: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6EAMqKUimr8
“Tinderbox” http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vgt1ZLDIy1M&feature=player_embedded#

Politics and the Economic Problem
Monday 5 January
Cohen Chapters 1, 2, Lehne Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4
Assignment #1 Federalism and economics: Marijuana marketplace
“Constitution USA, Episode 1”
http://www.pbs.org/tpt/constitution-usa-peter-sagal/watch/a-more-perfect-union/

Indicators of Economic Health
Tuesday 6 January
Review 8-9;
Exam 1 9:15-10:45
Cohen 76-97, Wheelan 9, Blackboard resources

The Debate over Government
Wednesday 7 January
Wheelan Chapters 1-4, Cohen Chapter 6
Assignment #1 Due
Assignment #2: The Budget game in practice: “Cliffhanger”
http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/cliffhanger/

Monetary, Fiscal, and Regulatory Policies
Thursday 8 January
Lehne 10-13, HM 6 and 7 (Required, Cohen Chapter 8 pages 207-217, rest of Chapter 8 and Chapter 9 are optional, but may help you with fiscal and monetary policy if you need more text).

Economic Actors and Influences
Friday 9 January
Review 8-9
Exam 2 9:15-10:45
HM 9, Lehne 6, 7
Readings on Revolving Door and Blackboard Resources
Assignment #2 Due
Monday 12 January
Lehne 8, 9
Readings on Campaign Finance – see Blackboard
Assignment #3: Campaign Finance: “Big Money 2012”
http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/big-money-2012/

**Recent Political Economic Debates**
Tuesday 13 January
8-9 Review
9:15-10:45 **Exam 3**
Wheelan Chapters
Corporate Personhood – Blackboard resources
Assignment #3 Corporate Actors – Untouchables
Begin Global Economy

**The Global Economy**
Wednesday 14 January
Lehne 5, 14
Review 10:15-11:15
Assignment #3 Due
Assignment #4 Letters Due
11:30-13 **Final Exam**