



McMaster University  
Department of Political Science

**POLSCI 790**  
**The Politics of Economic Policy in Market Economies**  
Winter 2017, Term 2

Instructor: Dr. Henry Jacek  
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Seminar: Tuesdays, 2:30 pm – 5:20 pm  
Classroom: KTH 732  
Office Hours: Thursdays, 2:00 pm - 4:00 pm  
or by appointment

**Description:**

This seminar examines the complex relationship between the worlds of politics and economics. The primary theme will be the modern state's struggle to maintain political autonomy and problem-solving capabilities in the face of internal economic demands that are often incompatible with the pressures of external policy actors. Our geographical focus will be on the advanced market economies and the comparative public policy literature that has grown up over the past fifty years on these countries. Our approach will be explicitly comparative yet I do not expect students to have prior specialized knowledge of these countries. I expect the members of this seminar to become familiar with the public policy literature on the influence of politics on economics and to gain an appreciation of the data policy-makers and scholars use, how these data are assembled and the strengths and weaknesses of the analyses of the political economy literature.

**Course Evaluation**

Participation:	30%
Research Design Proposal:	10%
Final Research Paper:	30%
Take Home Exam:	30%

## **The Topics to be Covered**

1. Introduction to the seminar
2. Why the Role of the State in the Economy has Grown
3. Economic Growth: Short Term (controlling the business cycle) and Long Term (continuing structural renewal)
4. Employment Goals versus Fear of Inflation
5. Opening Economies through Trade Agreements versus the Comparative Advantage of Nations
6. Fiscal Policies: Spend and Tax
7. Budget Balances and Government Debt
8. Political Cultures versus the Political Structure of Material Economic Interests
9. The Politics of Social Policies and Managing Domestic Economic Policy Actors
10. Economic Policy Ideas and Political Parties
11. Opinion of the Mass Public, Political Behaviour and Elections
12. Take Home Exam (30% of final grade)

## **Student Research**

A Research Design Proposal of about ten pages, for the seminar research project is due in to the instructor by Friday, February 17, 2017 at 4:00 p.m. This proposal will be 10% of the final grade.

The Final Research Paper, of about 30 pages, is due to the instructor by Friday, April 14, 2017 at 4:00 p.m. (30% of final grade).

There will be a penalty of 1% of the seminar total for every McMaster working day an assignment is late. Final Research Papers will be retained by the instructor for at least one year.

## **Student Participation**

For each seminar meeting after the first one, two students will make presentations on two separate themes. Each presentation should be about 20 minutes in length and based on at

least one scholarly chapter or journal article. The presenter should raise questions for discussion.

**Assignment and the System to be used in Assigning the Final Grade**

Each student will select an economic policy area studied in the seminar, e.g. employment policy, inflation policy, business cycle policy, structural economic policy, trade policy (openness), budget balance policy, tax policy, etc. for his/her seminar research. After the topic is agreed upon, the student will need to research through relevant literature especially recent scholarly articles and government/organization documents. In this review of the literature, you should note, first, how your policy area is divided into specific policy goals or solutions, how are they theoretically and operationally defined, their properties and sub-properties and indicators used to measure the success of policy in this area. Second, what explanatory theories are available to explain the variations of public policy in your policy area through time and across countries.

An indirect, partial and comparative understanding of the success of policy in this area can be obtained by analyzing the economic data trends. The major sources are the governments themselves, the OECD, the IMF, the World Bank, the ILO and the UN and its agencies.

### **Academic Dishonesty**

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity.

Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behaviour can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: “Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty”), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university.

It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy, located at [www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity](http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity)

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

1. Plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one’s own or for which other credit has been obtained.
2. Improper collaboration in group work.
3. Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

### **Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities**

Students who require academic accommodation must contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. Academic accommodations must be arranged for each term of study. Student Accessibility Services can be contacted by phone 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or e-mail [sas@mcmaster.ca](mailto:sas@mcmaster.ca). For further information, consult McMaster University’s Policy for Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities.

### **Faculty of Social Sciences E-Mail Communication Policy**

Effective September 1, 2010, it is the policy of the Faculty of Social Sciences that all e-mail communication sent from students to instructors (including TAs), and from students to staff, must originate from the student’s own McMaster University e-mail account. This policy protects confidentiality and confirms the identity of the student. It is the student’s responsibility to ensure that communication is sent to the university from a McMaster account. If an instructor becomes aware that a communication has come from an alternate address, the instructor may not reply at his or her discretion. Email Forwarding in MUGSI:

<http://www.mcmaster.ca/uts/support/email/emailforward.html>

\*Forwarding will take effect 24-hours after students complete the process at the above link (Approved at the Faculty of Social Sciences meeting on Tues. May 25, 2010)

### **Course Modification Statement**

The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check his/her McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.