

## **PUBP 3020-MM Syllabus**

Applied Political Economy PUBP 3020-MM, 3 Credits

Fall 2026

### **Instructor Information**

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### **General Course Information**

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#### **Description**

There are two different conceptions of political economy. The first is the effects of politics on the economy – how institutions and norms shape economic exchanges. The second is the use of economic incentives and models to study politics – how we can analyze interests and institutions to understand how politics works. We will use both. This is applied political economy, meaning that we will be looking at how these approaches inform our understanding of public policy and the world around us. Our course will cover political economy problems like collective action, information asymmetry, principal-agent dilemmas, and common pool resources. The final assignment will be a paper applying theories from the class to a policy issue at the Georgia Tech, Atlanta, or national level.

#### **Course Learning Outcomes**

Analyze policy problems from a political economy perspective, identifying the actors, interests, and institutional constraints that shape outcomes

Identify different historical perspectives on how governments should regulate markets, from classical liberalism through Keynesianism and neoliberalism

Understand how individual and group preferences interact, and the role of institutions in mediating these interactions, including through solutions to collective action problems, commitment problems, and information asymmetries

Diagnose real-world policy challenges — such as climate change, cybersecurity, and foreign aid — by matching them to the strategic dilemmas and models studied in the course

Apply a political economy model to a contemporary policy issue in a written analysis that identifies actors, interests, interactions, and potential institutional interventions

### **Required Course Materials**

Materials are from academic papers, books, and news articles. You should purchase a copy of this book through the Perusall platform.

- Heilbroner, Robert L. *The Worldly Philosophers: The Lives, Times, and Ideas of the Great Economic Thinkers*. Revised Seventh Edition. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1999.

Additional readings will be drawn from journal articles, regulatory proceedings, and news articles. Those will also be available in Perusall without cost. Doing the readings and discussing them via Perusall is very important and forms a significant portion of your grade. Other assignments assess your comprehension of the readings and lectures. Additional recommended or supplemental materials may be posted on the Canvas site in response to relevant ongoing events.

### **Grading Policy:**

Grading in this course is not curved; students will be graded based on how well they have met the requirements of each assignment and accomplished specific learning objectives. With the exception of quizzes, most assignments will have a rubric so that students can see what criteria are used for grading and what weight is given to them. Letter grades are assigned on a standard scale: A (90–100%), B (80–89%), C (70–79%), D (60–69%), F (0–59%).

### **Assignment**

- Perusall #1, 10%
- Perusall #2, 10%
- Midterm Essays, 10%
- Political Economy Problem Set, 20%
- Applied Political Economy Paper, 30%
- Paper Presentation, 10%
- Attendance and Participation, 10%

## **Description of Graded Components**

**Perusall Annotations (20%)** This course uses Perusall, a collaborative reading platform, for two annotation cycles. Students are expected to read assigned materials and contribute substantive annotations — questions, comments, and responses to classmates — by the posted deadline. Perusall access closes when the deadline passes, and no late submissions are accepted.

**Midterm Essays (10%)** Students will complete a set of essay questions assessing comprehension of course readings and lectures from the first portion of the semester. Essays should demonstrate your ability to explain and apply the concepts covered in class in your own words.

**Political Economy Problem Set (20%)** This assignment asks students to work through a set of structured problems using the models and frameworks from Part 3 of the course — collective action, the prisoner's dilemma, commitment problems, information asymmetry, and principal-agent dilemmas. The problem set assesses your ability to identify which model applies to a given scenario and reason through its logic.

**Applied Political Economy Paper (30%)** The major assignment in this course is a ~2,500-word paper applying political economy frameworks to a real policy issue. Students may choose either a national policy issue (e.g., cybersecurity, public health, climate change, social media) or a Georgia Tech campus policy issue. The paper should identify the relevant actors and their interests, describe how those actors interact using course models, and propose a potential policy intervention. A detailed assignment description and rubric will be provided on Canvas.

**Paper Presentation (10%)** Students will present their applied political economy paper to the class during the final weeks of the semester. Presentations should concisely convey the policy issue, the political economy framework applied, and the proposed intervention.

**Attendance and Participation (10%)** Regular attendance and active participation in class discussion are expected. This course covers material that builds sequentially, and engagement with lectures and in-class exercises is essential to success on the written assignments.

## **Course Policies**

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### **Attendance and/or Participation**

Attendance is expected at all class sessions. This course builds concepts sequentially, and much of the learning happens through in-class discussion of the readings and real-world applications. Because attendance and participation together account for 10% of your final grade, consistent presence matters. Attendance will be tracked.

If you need to miss class due to illness, a university-approved absence, or an emergency, please notify me by email before class when possible. Students who miss more than three classes without prior communication should expect a significant reduction in this portion of their grade.

If you anticipate an extended absence or recurring conflict, please come see me early in the semester so we can work out a plan.

### **Academic Integrity**

Georgia Tech aims to cultivate a community based on trust, academic integrity, and honor. Students are expected to act according to the highest ethical standards. Review [Georgia Tech's Honor Code](#) and the student [Code of Conduct](#).

Any student suspected of cheating or plagiarism on a quiz, exam, or assignment will be reported to the Office of Student Integrity, who will investigate the incident and identify the appropriate penalty for violations.

### **Core IMPACTS**

[Core IMPACTS](#) is the University System of Georgia's General Education curriculum. If you are teaching a course that counts towards Core IMPACTS, you should include a syllabus statement about the Core area and associated [career competencies](#). [This resource](#) developed by the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning and Online Education at Georgia State University includes template syllabus statements for each of the Core IMPACTS areas that you may adapt for your course.

### **Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**

If you are a student with learning needs that require special accommodation, [contact the Office of Disability Services](#) (404-894-2563) as soon as possible to make an appointment to discuss your special needs and to obtain an accommodations letter. Please also e-mail me as soon as possible in order to set up a time to discuss your learning needs.

### **Student-Faculty Expectations Agreement**

At Georgia Tech, we believe that it is important to strive for an atmosphere of mutual respect, acknowledgement, and responsibility between faculty members and the student body. [The Student-Faculty Expectations](#) articulate some basic expectations that you can have of me and that I have of you. In the end, simple respect for knowledge, hard work, and

cordial interactions will help build the environment we seek. Therefore, I encourage you to remain committed to the ideals of Georgia Tech while in this class.

## Campus Resources for Students

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### **Undergraduate Student Academic Success Resources:**

- Academic Support: Academic Success and Advising (a unit in the Office of Undergraduate Education & Student Success) provides free support for your courses. Students can attend scheduled supplemental review (PLUS) sessions, stop by Drop-In Tutoring, or schedule a one-on-one appointment through Knack. To explore what options work best for you, please visit us online at [success.gatech.edu/tutoring](https://success.gatech.edu/tutoring), email us at [tutoring@gatech.edu](mailto:tutoring@gatech.edu), or come see us at Clough Undergraduate Learning Commons, Suite 283.

### **Student Well-Being:**

At Georgia Tech, we are concerned about your overall physical, social, and mental well-being. A [comprehensive list](#) of wellness related resources has been compiled and maintained by the Office of the Vice President for Student Engagement and Well-being ([student-resource-guide \(gatech.edu\)](#))