THE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG
FACULTY OF BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS
ECON 2276: STATE, LAW AND THE ECONOMY
First Semester 2022-2023

Instructors: Professor Yue-Chim Richard Wong
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Office hours by appointment only at 2859-1122, K.K. Leung 1021

Dr. Vera Yuen
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K.K. Leung 820, 3917-1287
Office hours Tuesday: 13:30 – 14:30

Tutor: Colin Xiaokang Sheng
csxk@hku.hk
K.K. Leung 1026, 2857-8308

Course Logistics:

Dr. Vera Yuen will conduct the term paper class on how to prepare the proposal and fulfil the requirements of the term paper on 23 September 2022. Attendance is expected.

Prof. Wong and Dr. Yuen will conduct face-to-face lectures in class. Attendance is expected.

Lecture Schedule: Tuesday 12:30 – 13:30; Friday 12:30 – 14:30
Lecture Room: KK 202

We use a course management system named MOODLE. Please login to your HKU Portal account to access MOODLE. For further details, please refer to the “MOODLE Instruction Guide” that is posted on our MOODLE website.

Course Description:

This course applies economic analysis to study three institutions state, law, and the economy and their interrelationships. Topics include: Why is the nature of the state? What is its origin? What are the differences between the liberal and populist conceptions of the democratic state? What and why are there dilemmas of political organization, conflict, and succession in the autocratic state? What is the rule of law? How does the political and economic order relate to rent seeking groups? What is the difference between the common law and the civil law as legal systems? What consequences does it have? What is the modernization hypothesis and the critical juncture theory? How and why to dictatorships become democracies; and why sometimes the reverse happens? What is the role of economic, behavioural and structural factors in such transitions? Why are revolutions often surprises? Does democracy promote growth? Does the type of legal system one inherits promote growth? What is the relationship between rulers, citizens and interest groups in
the pre-industrial world? The course also adopts an analytic narratives approach to interpret comparative case histories drawn from Europe, America, China, India, and the Middle East.

**Aims:**

1. To teach economic concepts relevant to the study of political economy including the logic of collective action, theory of social choice, agenda manipulation, dictator’s dilemma, rent seeking, legal origins theory, constitutional commitment, transition from dictatorship to democracy, revolutions and uprisings, modernization hypothesis.

2. To provide a theoretical and empirical understanding of the behavior of the state in democracies and autocracies and their consequences for economic performance;

3. To analyze the economic, behavioral and structural factors influence the transformation of the state from an autocracy to a democracy and why there is a role for surprises;

4. To examine how the rule of law and the legal origins of the legal system affects economic performance;

5. To compare and contrast the historical experiences of Europe, America, China, India and the Middle East.

**Prerequisite:**

Students should have studied introductory microeconomics. Students may want to contact Dr. Vera Yuen for a possible waiver of the prerequisite.

**Assessment Tasks:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Method</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Weighting</th>
<th>Alignment with CILOs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>A two-hour written final exam</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written paper</td>
<td>Expository essay of 1500 words</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 4</td>
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</table>

There are two assessment requirements for this course: (1) a final exam (50%) covering topics taught in the course, and (2) a written paper of 1500 words (50%). The course grade 100% is determined as the sum of two assessment requirements. In addition, up to 5% participation bonus will be awarded to students who actively participate in class.

**Written Paper:**

The written paper should examine in depth ONE specific topic studied in the course. It should be a thoughtful examination of ONE specific topic based on the materials assigned in the reading list. There is NO need to consult additional reading materials. Students should NOT work on a subject from another course. Here are some good approaches:

1. Write a review of one of the books assigned in this course.

2. Compare and contrast the analysis between two books on a common subject.

3. Write on a topic that is discussed in several books or collection of papers.
(4) Consult with Dr. Vera Yuen for advice in deciding on a topic, she will also organize term paper sessions during normal lecture time for this purpose.

The final written paper is due on Sunday, 11 December 2022. Late submissions will NOT be accepted. A precise word count must be given at the end of the paper. Footnotes and references should be placed at the end of the paper so that they can be excluded from the word count. Appendices are not necessary and not appropriate for papers of such a short length and should not be submitted. It is advisable to seek English language assistance if needed to ensure that your paper is clear.

Students must submit a half-page proposal of the paper they intend to write. The deadline for the proposal is on Sunday, 9 October 2022. Late submissions will not be allowed. Students should include in the proposal student name, student number, the title of the project and a short summary of the subject they will investigate.

Students are also encouraged to submit a first draft of the final paper for the instructors to provide feedback, but this is optional, not mandatory. If students choose to submit a first draft, they must do so on Sunday, 6 November 2022. Your grade on the paper will depend only on your final paper, and not your draft. If you submit a written paper, but DID NOT submit a proposal or the proposal was NOT APPROVED, then you have FAILED this part of the assessment. Your first draft must be a complete one.

Therefore, deadlines to be observed:

Proposal submission — Sunday, 9 October 2022
First draft (optional) submission — Sunday, 6 November 2022
Final paper submission — Sunday, 11 December 2022

The proposal and paper(s) must be submitted electronically via MOODLE.

Course Syllabus:

Reading List

Required readings are marked with an asterisk; others are optional.

PRELIMINARIES

*YCR Wong, Notes on the Concept and Origins of the State, Spring 2015

PART ONE: THE STATE

1. POLITICS AS RATIONAL CHOICE AND COLLECTIVE ACTION


2. ON DEMOCRACY, SOCIAL CHOICE, AND POLITICS AS ART


3. ON AUTOCRACY, CONTROL, AND POWER SHARING


PART TWO: STATE AND THE ECONOMY

4. INTEREST GROUPS, RENT SEEKING AND GROWTH


5. DETERMINANTS OF DEMOCRACY: THE MODERNIZATION HYPOTHESIS VERSUS CRITICAL JUNCTURES


6. ORIGINS OF THE RULE OF LAW


7. RULE OF LAW AND GROWTH


PART FOUR: POLITICAL REVOLUTIONS AND CRITICAL JUNCTURES

8. DO REVOLUTIONS LEAD TO DEMOCRACIES?


**9. THE SURPRISE ELEMENT IN REVOLUTIONS**


**10. THE REVOLT OF THE PUBLIC IN THE NETWORKED INFORMATION AGE**


**Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)**

Upon completing this course, students should be able to:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CILO</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CILO1</td>
<td>Understand economic concepts in the study of political economy and apply them to interpret historical, contemporary and comparative experience;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CILO2</td>
<td>Understand the economic approach to the study of democracies and dictatorships;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CILO3</td>
<td>Understand how and why the transition of dictatorships into democracies can sometimes occur;</td>
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<tr>
<td>CILO4</td>
<td>Understand how the state and the legal origins of the law affects economic performance;</td>
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<tr>
<td>CILO5</td>
<td>Develop critical thinking in analyzing the relationships between politics, law and economics using both analytical tools and applying a comparative historical perspective.</td>
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**Alignment of program ILOs and course ILOs**

Teaching and Learning Activities (TLA)
### Aligned Faculty Goals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course ILOs</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acquisition and internalization of knowledge of economics &amp; finance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application and integration of knowledge</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inculcating professionalism and leadership</td>
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<tr>
<td>Developing global outlook</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mastering communication skills</td>
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</table>

### Course Teaching and Learning Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teaching and Learning Activity (TLA)</th>
<th>Expected contact hour</th>
<th>Study Load (% of study)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TLA1 Lecture</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TLA2 Discussion</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TLA3 Consultation</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TLA4 Written Assignment</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TLA5 Self Study</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>120</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
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</table>

### Alignment Among Course Intended Learning Outcome, Teaching and Learning Activities and Assessment Tasks:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Outcome</th>
<th>Teaching and learning activity (TLA)</th>
<th>Assessment Tasks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CILO1</td>
<td>TLA1, TLA2, TLA3</td>
<td>Written Paper and Exam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CILO2</td>
<td>TLA1, TLA2, TLA3</td>
<td>Written Paper and Exam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CILO3</td>
<td>TLA1, TLA2, TLA3</td>
<td>Written Paper and Exam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CILO4</td>
<td>TLA1, TLA2, TLA3</td>
<td>Written Paper and Exam</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Standards of Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Criteria and Standards</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+, A, A-</td>
<td>Identifies and addresses the main themes and issues clearly, including their subsidiary, embedded or implicit aspects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Consistent perceptive and critical engagement with the themes and issues based on comprehensive understanding of relevant concepts and theories, with effective analysis, synthesis and application of knowledge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Demonstrates a comprehensive command of existing arguments relevant to the topic, and examines the issues from all important perspectives including rival</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
positions and counter-evidence.
The arguments fit together logically and build a compelling case.

The paper has a clear structure and organization, with an introduction that states the main themes and writer’s position and a conclusion that summarizes the main arguments. Each paragraph has a central idea which is developed throughout the paragraph with supporting details.

The paper has very few, if any, errors in grammar and vocabulary.

Quoted materials from other sources (with proper citation) are used only to support and strengthen arguments instead of replacing the student’s own writing.

<p>| B+, B, B- | Identifies and addresses the main themes and issues, but not all subsidiary, embedded or implicit aspects. Generally perceptive and critical engagement with the themes and issues based on good understanding of relevant concepts and theories, as well as effective analysis, synthesis and application of knowledge. Demonstrates a good command of existing arguments relevant to the topic, and examines the issues with regard to some important perspectives including rival positions and counter-evidence. The arguments fit to form a clear own position, but some arguments are underdeveloped and some considerations overlooked. The paper has a clear structure and organization, with an introduction that states the main themes and the writer’s position and a conclusion that summarizes the main arguments. Some paragraphs lack a central idea or supporting details. The paper has some errors in grammar and vocabulary. Quoted materials from other sources (with proper citation) are used to support and strengthen arguments, but sometimes also used to replace the student’s own writing. |
| C+, C, C- | Identifies and addresses the main themes and issues, but not the subsidiary, embedded or implicit aspects. Only occasional perceptive and critical engagement with the themes and issues reflecting mostly superficial understanding of relevant concepts and theories, with some inaccurate analysis, synthesis and application of knowledge. Demonstrates insufficient command of existing arguments relevant to the topic, and not all main arguments or counter-arguments examined. Offers own position but the reasoning is sometimes impaired by weak, emotive or inconsistent argumentation. The presentation has an introduction and conclusion, but these do not fully capture the essence of the topic and discussion. Some paragraphs lack a central idea or supporting details. There are distracting language errors though the overall meaning is still... |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Failure to identify and address any main theme and issue. No critical engagement with any issue, little mentioning and application of relevant concepts and theories, and with inaccuracies when doing so. Demonstrates a lack of understanding of existing arguments relevant to the topic. No coherent own position and the arguments are confused and flawed. Introduction and conclusion are unclear, lack details or missing altogether. Shows little ability to organize the paper into paragraphs that have a central idea and supporting details. Language errors are so frequent and distracting that the paper is largely incomprehensible. Quoted materials from other sources are heavily used to replace the student’s own writing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+, D</td>
<td>Identifies and addresses the main themes and issues only partially. Very limited critical engagement with the themes and issues rarely goes beyond reproduction of relevant concepts and theories, and with some inaccuracies even doing so. Demonstrates a lack of understanding of existing arguments relevant to the topic. Offers own position but the arguments are poorly made and not well supported. The topic is not properly introduced and the conclusion is very brief. Shows little ability to construct paragraphs with a central idea and supporting details. Frequent errors in simple grammar and vocabulary. Errors are distracting and the overall meaning is not easily intelligible. Quoted materials from other sources (with proper citation) are heavily used to replace the student’s own writing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A+, A, A-</td>
<td>Demonstrates superior grasp of all aspects of the course (basic concepts and major perspectives and arguments in the literature). Demonstrates excellent ability to interrelate and synthesize course materials, and to arrive at one’s own position in controversial issues based on knowledge acquired from the course.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+, B, B-</td>
<td>Demonstrates good grasp of all major aspects of the course (basic concepts and major perspectives and arguments in the literature). Demonstrates reasonable ability to interrelate and synthesize course materials, and to arrive at one’s own position in controversial issues based on knowledge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grades</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>C+, C, C-</td>
<td>Demonstrates acceptable grasp of most major aspects of the course (basic concepts and major perspectives and arguments in the literature). Demonstrates acceptable ability to interrelate and synthesize course materials, and to arrive at one’s own position in controversial issues based on knowledge acquired from the course.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+, D</td>
<td>Demonstrates a marginally acceptable grasp of some major aspects of the course (basic concepts and major perspectives and arguments in the literature). Demonstrates a marginally acceptable ability to interrelate and synthesize course materials, and to arrive at one’s own position in controversial issues based on knowledge acquired from the course.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Failure to meet a minimum standard of knowledge base in the subject matter. Failure to arrive at one’s own position in controversial issues based on knowledge acquired from the course.</td>
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**Academic Conduct**

1. The University Regulations on academic dishonesty will be strictly enforced! Please check the University Statement on plagiarism on the web: [http://www.hku.hk/plagiarism/](http://www.hku.hk/plagiarism/)

2. Academic dishonesty is behavior in which a deliberately fraudulent misrepresentation is employed in an attempt to gain undeserved intellectual credit, either for oneself or for another. It includes, but is not necessarily limited to, the following type of case:

   a. Plagiarism – The representation of someone else’s ideas as if they are one’s own. Where the arguments, data, designs, etc., of someone else are being used in a paper, report, oral presentation, or similar academic project, this fact must be made explicitly clear by citing the appropriate references. The references must fully indicate the extent to which any parts of the project are not one’s own work. Paraphrasing of someone else’s ideas is still using someone else’s ideas, and must be acknowledged.

   b. Unauthorized Collaboration on Out-of-Class Projects - The representation of work as solely one’s own when in fact it is the result of a joint effort. Where a candidate for a degree or other award uses the work of another person or persons without due acknowledgement:

      - The relevant Board of Examiners may impose a penalty in relation to the seriousness of the offence;

      - The relevant Board of Examiners may report the candidate to the Senate, where there is *prima facie* evidence of an intention to deceive and where sanctions beyond those in (1) might be invoked.
c. Double Submission of Assignments - The submission of assignments as fulfillment of work in this course using materials that were or are being submitted for another course is also plagiarism. It is self-plagiarism and is the same as plagiarism, i.e., representation of someone else’s ideas as our own. That some else is oneself. It is an attempt to get credit for work that will earn credit elsewhere.

--- End ---