This half-unit reading seminar will survey a set of major topics in the Comparative Political Economy (CPE) of advanced capitalist and developing countries. The seminar is designed for PhD students (research students) across the School wanting to familiarize themselves with some of the major themes, controversies, and research frontiers in CPE. Our goal is to nurture innovation in doctoral-level CPE research at the LSE.

The seminar will be run by Catherine Boone and David Soskice. Soskice works on the CPE of the OECD countries. Boone works on the CPE of African economies and the developing world more generally. We have two objectives in this course.

Our first objective is to develop a course focused on understanding using CPE theory to understand how the contemporary world works. While situating our analyses in the context of a changing global economy, our focus will be on describing and explaining transformation at the level of nation states. Drivers of change can be found in the locus and organization of political power, in technological change, and/or in the dynamics of capital. Our seminar will explore both productive connections and tensions that emerge across explanatory models. We are particularly interested in the rise of the Knowledge Economy, and the Euro crises have confirmed, undermined, or transformed "varieties of capitalism" and how CPE scholars should understand their similarities, differences, and dynamics. Do problems, concepts, theories and empirical categories from the VoC literature and its descendants travel to the global South?

The MT 2019 version of this course explores different forms of inequality and the politics that they produce. The hypothesis is that the political salience of different forms of inequality (a.) varies over time and space, and (b.) that political institutions play an important role in conditioning the ways in which social inequalities become politically salient and find expression in the political arena. Can we theorize ideology, collective action, and cross-national variation in policy outcomes (eg. structure of social welfare regimes) within such a framework?

Versions of this course in past years have paid particular attention to accumulation regimes and the problem of secular stagnation (and the fall-out from the 2008 global financial crisis in the OECD countries more generally), the Eurocrisis, comparative welfare states and social policy regimes, distribution and redistributive conflict, regime transitions, and the middle-income trap. As in the past, the MT 2019 course will pay particular attention to ways in which comparativists and economists frame and use concepts of economic structure, agency (individual and collective), institutions, power, and ideology in making descriptive and causal inference. We will also trace the micro and macro economic theories that are woven through these works, comparing and contrasting economic models to those proposed in other disciplines.

More detailed questions could include rethinking models of:
growth and development: changing varieties of capitalism and developmentalism under conditions of financialisation, globalisation, and post-Bretton Woods global regulatory regimes. Is capitalist democracy sustainable?

levels, structures, and effects of inequality. How can we explain over time and cross-national variation in level/forms of social contract, support, and welfare systems? Do different forms of inequality underlie support for different welfare systems?

states, nation states, and capitalism: citizenship regimes, insiderism and outsiderism, inequality, poverty, predistribution and redistribution, political accountability and political choices; predatory, rentier, state-building, and capitalist states and regimes

the political underwriting of changing asset-ownership and technological regimes: global IPR regimes, knowledge, higher education, deskillning, urban skill clusters/agglomerations, innovation and its geographic distribution across the advanced and developing world, MNEs, privatization and de-nationalization, commodification, accumulation by dispossession, capital mobility

structure and change in labor markets, mobility, labor market participation: insiderism and outsiderism; (lumpen)proletarianization, informalism, flexibilization, exclusion; careers, women, and implications for the political expression of socio-economic cleavage (eg. political parties’ re-gendering or regionalization; disenfranchisement)

macroeconomics in open economies, tax regimes and financial systems, constrained and asymmetric monetary and fiscal policy; international debt regimes; the Eurozone.

A second objective is to enhance the role of the LSE as a multi- and inter-disciplinary institution for doctoral students. We aim to teach CPE not as a sub-discipline of political science but rather as a core tool for doctoral students across the social sciences, from (in LSE terms) sociology and social policy to political science and international relations, development, European studies, gender and law, as well as economics and economic history.

**Participation and Assessment**

-- Each seminar member will launch discussion of one week's reading (10 min. presentation, approx). You may focus on one reading (eg. book ch. or article) and discuss how it relates to other readings for that week, and to readings for earlier weeks.

-- We will reserve the last 40 min. of each seminar meeting, as well as the last 2 meetings of the term, for student presentations of dissertation proposals or chapters. Plan a 20 presentation of your work, leaving the rest of the time for discussion.

-- Assessment will be based on coursework (100%) in the MT. Each student will present their research project as described above and submit a 20 page (double spaced, approx. 5000 words) research paper, dissertation proposal, or draft dissertation chapter on T., Week 2 of LT as the basis of assessment for this course.

**Books (indicative list).** Avail. on-line via LSE library (see also LSE Readings on line (via course Moodle side)


Torben Iversen and David Soskice, Democracy and Prosperity: Reinventing capitalism through a turbulent century (CUP 2019).


L-E Cederman, K. Gleditsch, and H. Buhaug, *Inequality, Grievances and Civil War* (CUP 2013)

Course Outline and Readings

**Week 1. Oct. 3. Introductions, course overview, brief discussion of paradoxes and competing approaches**


**Week 2. Oct. 10. Inequality and Institutions in CPE.** What are the differences between the analytic models laid out in these two pieces? Where, if at all, do they converge?


**Recommended:**


Iversen and Soskice, *Democracy and Prosperity: Reinventing capitalism through a turbulent century* (CUP 2019), Chs. 1-4

**Recommended**


**Week 4. Oct. 24 Job Inequality: The Knowledge Economy and Its Discontents**

Iversen and Soskice, *Democracy and Prosperity* (CUP 2019), Chs. 5, 6.


**Recommended**


Daron Acemoglu and Pascual Restrepo, "AI, Automation, and Work," January 4, 2018 [NBER].


Rina Agrawala, *Informal Labor, Formal Politics, and Dignified Discontent in India* (CUP 2014), Ch. 1, "Informal Labor and Formal Politics."


**Week 5. Oct. 31. Political Inequality.** Is political inequality a distinct dimension of inequality and if so, how do we model its relationship to other forms of inequality in producing political outcomes? How does the Ardanaz and Mares' argument relate to the main contentions of the Scholzman et al piece? What are the implications of Achen and Bartels for the Iversen and Soskice argument?


Bruce Achen and Larry Bartels, *Democracy for Realists: Why elections do not produce responsive government* (Princeton, 2016), Selection TBA


**Recommended:**


**Week 6. Reading Week. No class**


**Recommended:**
- Lars- Erik Cederman, Kristian Gleditsch, and Halvard Buhaug, *Inequality, Grievances and Civil War* (CUP 2013)

**Week 8. Nov. 21. Spatial Inequality: Territorial Institutions and Spatial Inequality.**
Spatial Inequality and Redistribution: Territorial Structure, Preferences, Unequal Representation. How and why does the territorial fragmentation of political institutions shape patterns of inequality? Do geography and differential factor mobilities matter more in some polities than others? Do these analyses address the over time change (secular downward trend) in welfare state generosity in the capitalist democracies?


**Recommended:**
- Pablo Beramendi, *The Political Geography of Inequality: Regions and Redistribution*, CUP, 2104.

**Week 9. Nov. 28. North-South Inequality: Accumulation on a Global Scale**


Gary Gereffi, *Global Value Chains and Development: Redefining the contours of 21st century capitalism* (CUP 2018), Ch. 1: Emergence of Global Value Chains: Ideas, Institutions, and Research Communities

**Recommended:**


Yuen Yuen Ang, *How China Escaped the Poverty Trap* (Cornell 2019), Ch. 6, Connecting First Movers and Laggards, pp. 184-221.

Mark Dincecco, *State Capacity and Development* (CUP 2019)


Ilene Grabel, *When Things Don't Fall Apart: Global Financial Governance in Developmental Finance in An Age of Productive Incoherence*, MIT Press, 2018


**Week 10. Dec. 5. Presentations**