

Political Economy

The field of political economy is one of the MIT Political Science Department's longstanding strengths; indeed MIT is one of the few departments in the country to offer it as a separate subfield. The core political economy faculty span other subfields, including American, Comparative, International Relations and Methods. The department offers courses on political economy in both its broad meanings – the substantive impact of politics on economic processes and outcomes (and conversely, the influence of economic context and conditions on political dynamics) as well as the application of analytic tools of economics to the analysis of political behavior and outcomes. A common core within the Political Economy field is a deep understanding and mastery of various theoretical and empirical literatures and paradigms for analyzing state-economy relations. A field seminar covers major bodies of economic thought and considers a range of economic, sociological, and institutional approaches to political economy. Beyond this, the department offers a wide range of more specialized courses in political economy. These include courses on comparative political economy of the rich democracies, comparative political economy of the developing countries, and advanced topics in international political economy including among others trade, migration, and technology.

The Qualifying Exam in Political Economy

The purpose of the political economy qualifying exam is to test the breadth and depth of your knowledge of the field. Students will thus be expected to demonstrate knowledge across the various literatures in political economy, including international political economy, the political economy of development, the political economy of the advanced democracies. All of these aspects are covered by our faculty in the courses they regularly offer (see below). All students are expected to have taken the field seminar (PE I). Beyond this core requirement, we recommend that you take as many of the other political economy courses as feasible. Inevitably, you will not be able to take all of them, so we advise you to consult the most recent syllabi of courses you have not had a chance to take. Note that in the past, students were asked to prepare a special focus field for the exam. We are discontinuing this practice, effective January 2021.

Core Political Economy Teaching Faculty:

Devin Caughey
Volha Charnysh
Mariya Grinberg
F. Daniel Hidalgo
In Song Kim
Evan Lieberman
Kenneth Oye
Ben Ross Schneider
David A. Singer
Kathleen Thelen

Political Economy Course offerings

Field Seminar (offered every year)

17.100 Political Economy I: Theories of State and Economy

Topics in Political Economy (offered regularly)

17.150: The American Political Economy in Comparative Perspective
17.154: Varieties of Capitalism and Social Inequality
17.178. Political Economy of Institutions and Development
17.198: Current Topics in Comparative Political Economy
17.310: Science, Technology and Public Policy
17.312 Integrating Doctoral Seminar on Emerging Technologies
17.424: International Political Economy of Advanced Industrial Societies
17.430 International Relations Research Seminar
17.590: State Building
17.830: Empirical Methods in Political Economy
17.810/17.811: Game Theory and Political Theory
17.S951: Historical Political Economy
17.Sxxx: Political Economy of Security (coming soon!)

Discussion Groups and Seminars

Institute for Work and Employment Research Seminar Series
International Political Economy Speaker Series
Latin America Working Group
Seminar on State and Capitalism since 1800