International Relations/Political Science

Academic year 2019-2020

Everyday Political Economy

SP036 - Autumn - 6 ECTS
Monday 10:15 – 12:00 (S7)

Course Description

The study of political economy, and of international political economy in particular, often centres on structures, systems, regulations, abstract forces, and high-level politics. In this research seminar we propose to shift the focus and look at political economy as a diverse set of situated everyday practice. The first part of the class takes on theorizations of “the mundane” in diverse locations, including physical infrastructures, brands, and in race and gender relations. The second part interrogates everyday incarnations of political economy in situated practices, including finance, land grabs, social reproduction and circulation. Throughout the class, we are interested in problematizing the meanings of economic concepts, such as labour, markets and values, the way they are socially and politically produced, and the way they are expressed in material objects.

The class provides room for students to pursue a research project. It offers both theoretical and methodological reflections guiding the formulation of a topic, the execution of research, and the writing of a paper. Students also will gain presentation skills as they introduce their papers in class.

Requirements

1. Participation and Preparation

Regular attendance and participation are expected. One absence per semester is acceptable, without justification (though that would be much appreciated!).

You are expected to prepare for each class by reading a short compulsory article that introduces the theme of the week.

The required readings are available on Moodle.
2. Writing a Research Paper

A major focus of the class will be the preparation of the research paper. We will accompany this process throughout the semester by discussing steps for the paper in class and providing feedback on your progress. The theme of the paper should be related to the topic of the class.

A research proposal is due on September 30. The month of December is allocated to the completion of your research and writing. We will provide individualized feedback throughout that month. A first draft of the complete paper will be presented to the whole class in a separate session on December 20. The final draft of the revised paper, incorporating feedback from colleagues and professors is due on January 6. Late papers will be downgraded by .25 points for each day.

Overall, your grade will consist of the following:

- Preparation and participation 20 per cent
- Presentation of paper 20 per cent
- Research Paper 60 per cent

Course Overview

Readings marked * are the compulsory reading for the session. Other reading are optional

23 Sept

Introduction AL and LP

References laying out EPE approaches

Block 1: Things of Everyday Political Economy

30 Sept (AL) The Commodities


Class discussion: Formulating a research question

7 Oct (AL) The Infrastructures


Submit paper proposal

Class discussion: Literature review

14 Oct (AL) The Images (and brands)


Chicago: University of Chicago Press (chapter 2).

Class discussion: Theoretical framework

21 Oct

(AL) The Bodies


Class discussion: Academic contribution

Block 2: Practices of Everyday Political Economy

28 Oct

(LP) Gambling and Investing: Global Finance


Class discussion: Research design

4 Nov

[LP] Eating, Cooking, Shopping: Food Systems and Food Cultures


Class discussion: Data Collection and Analysis

11 Nov

[LP] Caring: Securing Reproduction


Rai, Shirin M., Catherine Hoskyns, and Dania Thomas. ‘Depletion: The Cost of
Class discussion: positionality and reflexivity

18 Nov [LP] Farming and Commercialisation


Class discussion: planning and developing an argument

25 Nov Write paper
2 Dec Write paper
9 Dec Write paper
16 Dec Write paper
20 Dec?? Present paper