Trinity College Dublin
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath
The University of Dublin

POP88174 — Political Economy A

Module Information	
Module Code	POP88174
Module Title	Political Economy A
Department	Political Science
Module Personnel	Sharyn O'Halloran
Academic Year	2026–27
Credit Weighting	5 credits
Semester	Semester 2
Contact Hours	10 hours

Module Content	
Module Description	This course introduces students to the frontier of political economy, a method that applies economic analysis to the study of political outcomes. The course develops an analytical toolkit for examining how societal preferences, institutions, and strategic interaction shape public policymaking. It is organized around a series of topics, beginning with social choice theory and voting, and then turning to questions of political accountability, collective action, interest group politics, lobbying, regulation, trade, and institutional design. The course applies these tools to policy domains such as trade policy, financial regulation, and economic integration.
Module Learning Aims	• Introduce students to political economy as a method for analysing political institutions, public policymaking, and policy outcomes. • Develop students' understanding of how preferences, institutions, and strategic interaction shape policy choices.

Module Content	
	• Provide students with core tools for analysing voting, collective action, accountability, lobbying, regulation, and institutional design. • Develop students' ability to apply political economy models to contemporary policy problems. • Strengthen students' ability to evaluate policy arguments by linking theory, evidence, and implications.
Learning Outcomes	On successful completion of this module, students should be able to: • Explain core political economy models, including social choice theory, voting models, collective action, and strategic interaction. • Analyse how preferences, institutions, and political incentives shape public policymaking. • Explain how interest groups, lobbying, and political contributions influence policy choices. • Analyse questions of political accountability, including how voters, interest groups, and institutions constrain political actors. • Apply political economy models to contemporary policy problems in areas such as trade, financial regulation, economic integration, and institutional design. • Develop a clear analytical argument that links theory, evidence, and policy implications.
Indicative Reading / Resources	• Baron, David. Business and Its Environment, 7th ed. • Shepsle, Kenneth. Analyzing Politics, 2nd edition. • Olson, Mancur. The Logic of Collective Action. • Ostrom, Elinor. Governing the Commons. • Stiglitz, Joseph. The Economics of the Public Sector. • Merlo, Antonio. Political Economy and Policy Analysis. • Persson, Torsten, and Guido Tabellini. Political Economics: Explaining Economic Outcomes. MIT Press, 2000. Additional readings, cases, and discussion prompts will be posted on Blackboard.

Assessment	
Assessment Components	Participation: 10% Response Assignment: 25% Final Paper / Project: 65%
Assessment Details	The response assignment requires students to apply political economy concepts to assigned readings, cases, or policy questions. The final paper/project requires students to apply the course framework to a selected policy problem. The project should identify the relevant actors, preferences, institutions, and outcomes; state a clear argument; use evidence to support the analysis; and explain the policy implications. Participation is based on attendance, preparation, and informed engagement with class discussion.

Additional Information	
Prerequisites	None
Co-requisites	None
Any other information	