Hidden Politics
PS 497.04
Fall 2005

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Course Description

This course examines politics that take place outside of the public sphere of formal governmental activity, elections, or civil society negotiation. These informal institutions and politics are concerned with the same exchanges of power and relations of authority that “overt” or formal politics are, but they take place outside of the purview of most political analysis. We will explore these political activities and institutions, which include informal norms and regulation of behavior, corruption, the politicization of the private sphere, and everyday forms of resistance. These analyses will allow us to examine such questions as “how do informal institutions arise and function?,” “why are some societies more corrupt than others?” or “how does gossip and ostracism substitute for state enforcement?”

Course Requirements

1. Participation and discussion: 30% of the grade.

2. Research Papers: 50%. The research papers should examine the rise, function, or effects of informal activities, institutions, or mechanisms. We will break down the paper into component parts (puzzle, competing explanations, hypotheses, data and testing, etc), and these sections will be due in class in weeks 5, 7, and 9. The paper should apply the theories and concepts discussed in class in generating hypotheses, test them against other explanations, and provide a credible causal account. The suggested length is 20-25 pages.

3. Oral presentations of papers at the end of term: 20%. These should incorporate the insights of your paper into a broader theoretical framework, present the central findings, and relate how these might apply in different contexts.
Readings:

Asterisked readings are available at http://www.lib.umich.edu/ejournals/

The following books are available for purchase:


Week 1 (Sept 6): Introduction

Week 2 (Sept 13): What are “politics”? Order, Conflict, and Authority


Week 3 (Sept 20): Information, Distribution, Enforcement


Further Readings:


Week 4 (Sept 27): Allies, Networks, and Gossip


DUE DATE #1: Your Research Puzzle and the Dependent Variable


Week 6 (Oct 11): Informal Organizations: The Mafia


October 18th: No Class

Week 7 (Oct 25): Corruption

DUE DATE #2: Competing Explanations and Hypotheses


**Week 8 (Nov 1): Clientelism and Patronage**


**Week 9 (Nov 8): Politicizing the Private Sphere: Families, Gender, and Choice**

DUE DATE #3: Evidence, Causality, and Methods


**Week 10 (Nov 15): Hidden Markets: Informal Exchanges and Reciprocity**


**Weeks 11-13 (Nov 22, Dec 6, Dec 13): Student Presentations**