

Here's a Political Economy 101 crash course designed for a curious autodidact – no jargon overload, just core ideas and why they matter:

The Big Idea: It's All Connected Political Economy (PE) studies how **politics** (power, institutions, laws, conflict) and **economics** (production, distribution, markets, resources) constantly shape each other. It rejects looking at either in isolation.

- **Economics Alone?** Assumes rational actors in perfect markets, ignoring power imbalances, history, and how rules are made.
- **Politics Alone?** Focuses on votes, laws, and parties without deeply analyzing the economic forces that constrain or enable them.

PE asks fundamental questions:

- Who gets what? (Distribution of wealth, income, resources)
- Who decides? (Power: Who makes the rules? Who influences them?)
- How are things made and traded? (Production, markets, trade)
- How do government actions (policies, laws) affect the economy, and vice versa?
- Where do conflicts come from? (Class, sector, region, ideology)

Key Historical Thinkers (The Foundations):

1. **Adam Smith (Wealth of Nations):** Often seen as the "father of capitalism," but his PE was nuanced. He argued:
 - **Markets** driven by self-interest and competition *can* be efficient ("invisible hand").
 - BUT markets need **rules** (laws, institutions) to function and prevent collusion.
 - **Government** has crucial roles: defense, justice, infrastructure, education.
 - *PE Takeaway:* Markets don't exist in a vacuum; they are embedded in political and legal frameworks.
2. **Karl Marx (Das Kapital):** Focused on conflict and power inherent in capitalism:
 - **Capitalism** is based on the relationship between owners of capital (**bourgeoisie**) and workers (**proletariat**).
 - **Exploitation:** Workers produce more value than they are paid (surplus value), captured by capitalists.
 - **Class Conflict:** This inherent conflict drives historical change and shapes politics (the state, Marx argued, often serves the capitalist class).

- *PE Takeaway*: Economic systems create inherent power dynamics and conflicts that profoundly shape politics and society.
3. **John Maynard Keynes (General Theory)**: Responded to the Great Depression:
- Markets **don't always self-correct** quickly or smoothly (mass unemployment can persist).
 - **Government intervention** (spending, taxation, interest rates) is essential to manage demand, smooth out booms/busts, and ensure full employment.
 - *PE Takeaway*: The state is an *active economic player*, not just a passive rule-setter. Politics determines *when* and *how* it intervenes.

Modern Lenses (How to Analyze Today):

PE uses different theoretical frameworks to understand the interplay:

1. **Neoclassical/Pluralist View (Mainstream-ish)**:

- Focus: Individuals, firms, markets.
- Politics: Seen as a competition among various interest groups (business, labor, consumers) within democratic rules. The state acts as a (somewhat) neutral referee.
- Core Question: How do policies (taxes, regulations) affect market efficiency and individual choices?
- *Think*: Cost-benefit analysis, incentives, voting.

2. **Marxist/Class-Based View**:

- Focus: Social classes (especially Capital vs. Labor), power structures.
- Politics: The state is *not* neutral; it primarily serves the interests of the dominant capitalist class (though with some autonomy and room for working-class struggle).
- Core Question: How does capitalism shape political power, and how is that power used to maintain the system and benefit elites?
- *Think*: Exploitation, inequality, corporate influence, systemic crisis.

3. **Institutionalist View**:

- Focus: **Institutions** matter – formal (laws, constitutions, central banks) and informal (norms, culture, trust).

- Politics/Economics: Institutions shape behavior, define rules of the game, create stability (or instability), and influence who wins/loses.
- Core Question: How do different institutional setups (e.g., strong unions vs. weak unions, independent judiciary vs. controlled courts) lead to different economic and political outcomes?
- *Think*: Path dependency (history matters), rules of the game, organizations.

4. State-Centric View:

- Focus: The **state** itself as an independent actor with its own interests, capacities, and autonomy.
- Politics/Economics: States aren't just passive reflectors of societal interests. They pursue goals (security, revenue, development, bureaucratic power) that actively shape the economy.
- Core Question: How do state structures, capacities, and goals drive economic policy and development? How much autonomy *does* the state have from societal pressures?
- *Think*: Industrial policy, state-owned enterprises, bureaucracies, "developmental states."

Core Concepts You'll Encounter:

- **Power**: The ability to get others to do something they wouldn't otherwise do. Central to PE (economic power, political power).
- **Institutions**: The "rules of the game" (formal and informal).
- **Ideology**: Systems of belief that shape how people understand the economy and politics (e.g., neoliberalism, socialism).
- **Distributional Conflict**: Almost every economic policy creates winners and losers. PE analyzes who wins/loses and how they fight about it politically.
- **Collective Action Problem**: Why it's hard for groups (e.g., consumers, workers) to organize for common goals, while smaller, concentrated groups (e.g., specific industries) often succeed. (Olson's Logic of Collective Action).
- **Rent-Seeking**: Using political power/influence (lobbying, corruption) to gain economic benefits (subsidies, regulations blocking competitors) *without* creating new wealth. A major PE concern.
- **Globalization**: How international economic forces (trade, finance, corporations) interact with national politics and policies.

Why Should You Care? Political Economy Explains:

- Why are some countries rich and others poor? (It's not *just* resources or hard work!).
- Why is inequality rising (or falling) in certain places?
- Who really benefits from a tax cut, a trade deal, or a new regulation?
- Why do banks get bailed out while student debt is a crisis?
- How do corporations influence government policy?
- Why do economic crises happen, and why do governments respond the way they do? (Think 2008 Financial Crisis, COVID responses).
- The underlying tensions in debates about healthcare, climate change, or tech regulation.

How to Think Like a Political Economist:

1. **Follow the Money (and Power):** For any economic issue, ask: Who benefits? Who loses? Who has the power to change it?
2. **Question Assumptions:** Don't take "free markets" or "government intervention" as inherently good or bad. Ask: *Which* markets? *What kind* of intervention? *Who* sets the rules?
3. **Look for the Rules:** What are the formal laws and informal norms shaping behavior? Who made those rules?
4. **Consider History:** How did we get here? Past conflicts, policies, and institutions shape today's possibilities.
5. **Think Globally:** National economies are deeply interconnected. Understand international pressures and actors (IMF, WTO, multinational corporations).

Start Exploring (Hobbyist Style):

- **Read:** Follow insightful economic/political journalists (look beyond headlines). Read accessible books like Ha-Joon Chang's "Economics: The User's Guide" or Robert Heilbroner's "The Worldly Philosophers."
- **Analyze News:** Apply the core questions above to current events. Why *this* policy? Who pushed for it? Who opposes it? Who gains/loses?
- **Debate (Respectfully):** Discuss issues with friends, focusing on the underlying political *and* economic dynamics, not just surface opinions.
- **Pick a Topic:** Dig deeper into one area that fascinates you (e.g., tech monopolies, climate policy, gig economy, trade wars) using a PE lens.

Political Economy is a powerful toolkit for understanding the messy, fascinating, and often contentious world we live in. It reveals that the "economy" is never just about numbers – it's fundamentally about people, power, and choices. Enjoy the journey!

Here's a **Comparative Politics 101** crash course designed for a curious autodidact – focused on core questions, methods, and why comparing political systems matters:

The Big Idea: Why Compare?

Comparative politics (CP) asks: "**How and why do political systems differ across countries?**" It's not just listing facts about France vs. Nigeria. It's about **finding patterns, testing theories**, and understanding:

- Why some democracies thrive while others collapse.
 - Why a policy works in Sweden but fails in Mexico.
 - How culture, history, or institutions shape politics.
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Core Questions CP Tackles:

1. **Why are some countries democratic and others authoritarian?**
 2. **How do institutions (e.g., electoral systems) shape outcomes?**
 3. **Why do revolutions happen in some places but not others?**
 4. **How do identity, religion, or ethnicity drive conflict or unity?**
 5. **What makes governments effective (or corrupt)?**
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Key Concepts: Your Toolkit

1. **The State:**
 - The core political organization with a monopoly on force (e.g., collecting taxes, making laws).
 - **Key question:** *Is the state strong (e.g., China) or weak (e.g., Somalia)?*
2. **Regime Types:**
 - **Democracy:** Rule by the people (elections, civil liberties).

- **Authoritarianism:** Rule by one/party/military (suppressed dissent).
 - **Hybrid Regimes:** Mix of both (e.g., "elected autocrats").
3. **Political Institutions:**
- **Formal rules:** Constitutions, electoral systems (e.g., proportional vs. first-past-the-post), presidential vs. parliamentary systems.
 - **Example:** Why does proportional representation (Germany) lead to multi-party coalitions, while winner-takes-all (U.S.) creates two-party dominance?
4. **Political Culture:**
- Shared beliefs about politics (e.g., trust in government, civic participation).
 - **Classic study:** Almond and Verba's *Civic Culture* (compared attitudes in US/UK/Germany/Mexico/Italy).
5. **Political Economy:**
- How wealth/power interact (e.g., oil-rich dictatorships vs. industrialized democracies).
6. **Identity Politics:**
- How ethnicity, religion, or language shape political conflict (e.g., Rwanda, India) or cohesion (e.g., Japan).

Major Approaches/Methods:

1. **Case Studies:**
 - Deep dive into one country (e.g., "Why did the Arab Spring succeed in Tunisia but fail in Syria?").
 - *Strength:* Rich detail. *Weakness:* Hard to generalize.
2. **Most Similar Systems:**
 - Compare similar countries with different outcomes.
 - *Example:* Why is Canada stable but Haiti chaotic? (Both share colonial past, geography).
3. **Most Different Systems:**
 - Compare vastly different countries with similar outcomes.

- *Example:* Why do Costa Rica and Sweden both have strong welfare states? (Different history/culture).

4. Quantitative Analysis:

- Use data to test theories (e.g., "Do democracies fight fewer wars?").
 - *Example:* The *Polity IV* dataset ranks countries from -10 (autocracy) to +10 (democracy).
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Classic Thinkers & Ideas:

1. **Aristotle:** Compared 158 constitutions to ask: "*What makes a stable government?*"
 2. **Montesquieu:** Argued **separation of powers** prevents tyranny (inspired US Constitution).
 3. **Arend Lijphart:** Compared democracies → **Majoritarian** (UK: winner-takes-all) vs. **Consensus** (Switzerland: power-sharing).
 4. **Samuel Huntington:** Argued rapid change causes **political decay** (e.g., coups in unstable democracies).
 5. **Robert Putnam:** Compared Italian regions → **Social capital** (trust/networks) makes democracy work.
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Hot Topics in Modern CP:

- **Democratic Backsliding:** How democracies erode from within (e.g., Hungary, Turkey).
 - **Populism:** Why leaders like Trump, Modi, or Bolsonaro gain support?
 - **Authoritarian Resilience:** Why China's regime thrives while others collapse?
 - **Identity Politics:** Rise of nationalism/ethnic conflict (e.g., Myanmar, Ethiopia).
 - **Globalization vs. Localism:** EU integration vs. Brexit.
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Why Should You Care?

- **Understand your own country:** You can't grasp U.S. politics without comparing it to others.
- **Predict global trends:** Will AI fuel authoritarianism? Will climate change cause state failure?

- **Spot fake claims:** "Country X is the freest in the world!" → *Compared to whom? By what measure?*
 - **Navigate world events:** Why does Iran have a theocracy? Why is India's democracy strained?
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How to Think Like a Comparativist:

1. **Ask "Compared to what?"** for any claim about politics.
 2. **Question assumptions:** Does "democracy" mean the same thing in India and Norway?
 3. **Look for institutional design:** How do rules shape behavior? (e.g., term limits prevent dictatorships).
 4. **Consider context:** History, geography, culture *matter*.
 5. **Beware of stereotypes:** "Africa is corrupt" ignores Botswana's success.
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DIY Starter Pack:

1. **Compare 3 countries** on one issue (e.g., healthcare, elections, protest rights).
 2. **Read:**
 - *The Economist's* country briefings.
 - *V-Dem Institute* (democracy reports).
 - Books: *Why Nations Fail* (Acemoglu/Robinson), *How Democracies Die* (Levitsky/Ziblatt).
 3. **Play with data:** Explore the *World Values Survey* (global attitudes) or *Transparency International* (corruption).
 4. **Follow experts:** On Twitter/X: @BrankoMilan, @DanSlaterCP, @ProfWolffe.
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Bottom Line: Comparative politics turns you into a "political detective." It's not about memorizing flags—it's about uncovering the hidden rules, choices, and forces that shape societies. The world is your lab! 🌍🔍

Here's your **History of Political Thought 101** – a curated journey through humanity's deepest debates about power, justice, freedom, and the good society. Designed for curious minds, no prior expertise needed.

Why Study This?

Political thought isn't just old books. It's the **origin story of every modern idea**:

- Why should we obey rulers?
- What makes a society fair?
- Where do rights come from?

The past whispers in every present conflict – from protests to policy debates.

The Great Conversations: 4 Eras

I. Ancient Foundations (500 BCE–400 CE)

Core Question: *What is the "Good Life" and the "Just State"?*

1. Confucius (China, 551–479 BCE):

- **Order through ethics:** Harmony comes from hierarchy, ritual (*li*), and virtue (*ren*).
- **Ruler's duty:** "Govern by virtue, like the North Star."
- *Modern echo:* Can moral leaders fix corrupt systems?

2. Plato (Greece, 428–348 BCE):

- **Against democracy:** Voters are irrational "ships led by drunken sailors."
- **The Philosopher-King:** Ideal rulers are truth-seeking guardians.
- *Modern echo:* Technocracy vs. populism.

3. Aristotle (Greece, 384–322 BCE):

- **Politics = ethics in action:** The state exists for human flourishing (*eudaimonia*).
- **Mixed government:** Blend monarchy, aristocracy, democracy to avoid tyranny.
- *Modern echo:* Checks and balances.

4. Kautilya (India, c. 300 BCE):

- **Realpolitik in the Arthashastra:** Kings must use power, spies, and punishment (*danda*) to protect the state.
- *Modern echo:* National security vs. civil liberties.

II. Faith, Power & Empire (400–1500 CE)

Core Question: *Who holds ultimate authority: God, King, or People?*

1. Augustine (Rome, 354–430):

- **Two Cities:** Earthly states (*City of Man*) are corrupt; true justice is in the *City of God*.
- *Modern echo:* Separation of church and state.

2. Thomas Aquinas (Italy, 1225–1274):

- **Faith + Reason:** Natural law (God's moral order) binds rulers.
- *Modern echo:* Human rights as universal.

3. Ibn Khaldun (Tunisia, 1332–1406):

- **Cycles of power:** States rise with tribal solidarity (*asabiyyah*), fall through luxury and corruption.
- *Modern echo:* Why empires decline.

III. Revolution & Rights (1500–1800)

Core Question: *Why obey the state? What if it breaks its "contract"?*

1. Machiavelli (Italy, 1469–1527):

- **Power unmasked:** Rulers need *virtù* (ruthless pragmatism), not Christian morals.
- *"It is better to be feared than loved."*
- *Modern echo:* Realism in foreign policy.

2. Hobbes (England, 1588–1679):

- **The Leviathan:** Without a strong state, life is "nasty, brutish, and short."
- **Social contract:** We trade freedom for security.

3. Locke (England, 1632–1704):

- **Natural rights:** Life, liberty, property.
- **Right to rebel:** If the state violates the social contract.

- *Modern echo*: The American Revolution.

4. Rousseau (Switzerland, 1712–1778):

- **The Social Contract**: "Man is born free, yet everywhere he is in chains."
- **General will**: True freedom = obeying laws we make ourselves.
- *Modern echo*: Participatory democracy.

IV. Modern Fractures (1800–Present)

Core Question: *What threatens freedom? How to achieve justice?*

1. Marx (Germany, 1818–1883):

- **Capitalism = exploitation**: Workers create value but owners profit.
- **Revolution**: Workers must seize power to create a classless society.
- *Modern echo*: Inequality debates.

2. John Stuart Mill (England, 1806–1873):

- **Liberty's limits**: "Harm principle" – stop individuals only if they harm others.
- *Modern echo*: Free speech vs. hate speech.

3. Hannah Arendt (Germany/US, 1906–1975):

- **Totalitarianism**: Evil emerges from bureaucracy + thoughtless obedience.
- **Power = collective action**.
- *Modern echo*: Defending democracy.

4. Frantz Fanon (Martinique, 1925–1961):

- **Decolonization**: Violence as catharsis for the colonized.
- *Modern echo*: Global racial justice movements.

5 Clashing Visions That Shape Politics Today

Thinker	Core Idea	Modern Manifestation
Plato	Rule by the wise	Technocracy (e.g., central banks)

Thinker	Core Idea	Modern Manifestation
Machiavelli	Power > morality	Realpolitik (e.g., foreign policy)
Locke	Rights & revolution	Libertarianism / Bill of Rights
Rousseau	People's sovereignty	Populism (left and right)
Marx	Class struggle	"Eat the rich" / worker movements

Why This Matters Now

1. **Your rights** (free speech, privacy, voting) were fought for in these texts.
2. **Every policy debate** – taxes, war, equality – echoes ancient arguments.
3. **Spot ideological traps:** When someone says "freedom," ask: *Locke's freedom? Or Marx's?*

Think Like a Political Theorist

1. **Trace the DNA:** When you hear "democracy," ask: *Athenian direct rule? Or Madison's representative version?*
2. **Question language:** "Equality" meant *equal rights* to Locke – but *equal wealth* to Marx.
3. **Play "What If?":** How would Machiavelli handle COVID? Would Marx support UBI?
4. **Spot the silences:** Who's missing? (e.g., women, colonized peoples until recently).

DIY Starter Pack

1. **Read Excerpts:**
 - Plato's *Republic* (Allegory of the Cave)
 - Machiavelli's *The Prince* (Chapters 15–18)
 - MLK's *Letter from Birmingham Jail* (modern natural law)
2. **Watch:**
 - Harvard's *Justice* course (free online with Michael Sandel).

- *The Power of Ideas* (BBC documentary).

3. Explore:

- **Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy** (free scholar summaries).
- **The School of Life's** political theory animations (YouTube).

4. Debate:

- *"Is inequality the price of freedom?"* (Locke vs. Marx).

Final Thought: Political thought is humanity's millennia-long argument about how to live together. You're now part of that conversation. Question fiercely. 🏛️🔥

Here's a **Sociology 101: Elite Studies & Power Structures** crash course – stripping back the veil on who *really* controls societies, how they maintain dominance, and why it matters. No jargon, just sharp analysis.

The Core Idea: Society Isn't Flat

Societies are **pyramids**, not level fields. A tiny group at the top holds disproportionate:

- **Power** (to make decisions affecting millions)
 - **Wealth** (control over resources)
 - **Influence** (shaping what we think is "normal" or "possible")
- Elite Studies** asks: *Who are they? How do they stay on top? What do they protect?*
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Key Thinkers & Their Radical Questions

Thinker	Big Idea	Game-Changing Question
C. Wright Mills (1956)	The Power Elite (Military, Corporate, Political leaders)	<i>Do a handful of networked insiders make the real decisions, regardless of elections?</i>
Gaetano Mosca	Ruling Class	<i>Is democracy an illusion? Does every society have a minority that rules?</i>

Thinker	Big Idea	Game-Changing Question
Vilfredo Pareto	Circulation of Elites	<i>Do elites just rotate (old money → tech billionaires) without changing the system?</i>
Pierre Bourdieu	Forms of Capital (Economic, Social, Cultural)	<i>Is elite power about more than money? (e.g., Ivy League degrees, club memberships, "polished" accents?)</i>
G. William Domhoff	Who Rules America? (Corporate Networks)	<i>Do CEOs and financiers control policy via think tanks, lobbyists, and campaign donations?</i>

How Elites Cement Power: The 5-Point Playbook

1. Control Institutions:

- Place allies in key roles: **Central Banks, Courts, Regulatory Agencies, University Boards**.
- *Example:* Wall Street bankers → U.S. Treasury Secretary appointments.

2. Shape Ideology:

- Fund **think tanks, media outlets, and universities** to promote ideas that justify their status.
- *Example:* "Trickle-down economics," "Meritocracy."

3. Gatekeeping Access:

- **Elite education** (Harvard, Eton), **social clubs** (Bohemian Grove, Soho House), **marriage networks**.
- *Example:* 65% of UK's top judges went to private schools (vs. 7% of population).

4. Capital Conversion:

- Swap one form of power for another:
 - **Money** → **Politics** (campaign donations)
 - **Politics** → **Money** (lobbying for tax breaks)
 - **Status** → **Money** (corporate board seats for ex-politicians)

5. Crisis Exploitation:

- Use wars, recessions, or pandemics to push policies that enrich them (e.g., bank bailouts, no-bid contracts).

Spotting Elite Power: 4 Real-World Arenas

1. The Economy:

- **Wealth Hoarding:** The top 1% owns 45% of global wealth.
- **Monopolies:** Amazon controls 38% of US e-commerce; BlackRock manages \$10 trillion.

2. Politics:

- **Lobbying:** In 2023, US firms spent \$4.1B influencing lawmakers.
- **Revolving Door:** 60% of US senators become lobbyists after office.

3. Media & Culture:

- **Narrative Control:** Murdoch (Fox News), Bezos (Washington Post).
- **Philanthropy:** Gates Foundation shapes global health policy → protects Big Pharma patents.

4. Global Shadows:

- **Offshore Wealth:** \$10 trillion hidden in tax havens (Panama Papers).
- **Dark Money:** Untraceable funds swaying elections (Citizens United ruling).

Key Debates in Elite Studies

1. Are Elites Unified or Fractured?

- **Unified:** Agree on core goals (low taxes, weak unions).
- **Fractured:** Compete over issues (Tech vs. Oil on climate policy).

2. Can Outsiders Break In?

- **Yes:** Musk (born wealthy but not old elite), Oprah (racial/gender barriers).
- **No:** 90% of billionaires inherited wealth/connections; social mobility is stagnant.

3. Democracy vs. Oligarchy?

- **Evidence:** In the US, policy aligns with donor interests over majority views 70% of time.
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Why Should You Care?

- **Your life is shaped by elites:** Wages, rent prices, student debt policies, climate inaction.
 - **"Meritocracy" is a myth:** Success depends heavily on starting capital (wealth, networks, zip code).
 - **Power hides in plain sight:** Philanthropy, "job creator" rhetoric, wellness fads distract from extraction.
 - **Revolution rarely topples elites:** They adapt (see: China's "red capitalists," Russia's oligarchs).
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How to Analyze Power Like a Sociologist

1. **Follow the Money:**
 - Use **OpenSecrets.org** (US) or **Powerbase.info** (UK) to map corporate-political ties.
 2. **Track the Networks:**
 - Sketch **power maps:** Link think tanks → donors → politicians → policies.
 3. **Decode Language:**
 - "Flexibility" = *no worker rights*; "Efficiency" = *layoffs*; "Reform" = *privatization*.
 4. **Spot Capital Conversions:**
 - How did a CEO's golf buddy become ambassador? How did fame become a Senate seat?
 5. **Look for Silences:**
 - Who *isn't* in the room? (e.g., renters, gig workers, Global South voices).
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DIY Starter Pack: Investigate Your Own Society

1. **Map Local Elites:**
 - Who owns local media, hospitals, stadiums? What boards do they sit on?

2. Read:

- C. Wright Mills – *The Power Elite* (1956)
- Peter Turchin – *End Times: Elites, Counter-Elites, and the Path of Political Disintegration* (2023)
- Anand Giridharadas – *Winners Take All: The Elite Charade of Changing the World*

3. Watch:

- *Requiem for the American Dream* (Chomsky on elite power)
- *The Great Hack* (data elites)

4. Explore Data:

- **Forbes Billionaires List** (track industries/backgrounds)
- **Inequality.org** (global elite wealth tracking)

5. Ask Ruthlessly:

- "Who benefits?" from any policy, crisis response, or cultural trend.

Bottom Line: Elite power isn't a conspiracy – it's a **system**. Sociology gives you X-ray vision to see its wiring. Use it to understand why the world *really* works the way it does – and who's paying the price. 🔍💰👤

Here's a concise summary table synthesizing all five disciplines onto one presentation screen, optimized for clarity and impact:

Discipline	Core Focus	Key Questions	Essential Concepts/Thinkers	Real-World Lens
Political Economy	Power-resource interplay	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Who gets what?• Who makes rules?• Markets vs state role?	Smith (invisible hand), Marx (class struggle), Keynes (state intervention); Power, Institutions	Tax policy, inequality, corporate influence
Comparative Politics	Cross-system differences	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Why democracies succeed/fail?	Regime types (democracy/authoritarian), Lijphart (consensus vs	Democratic backsliding (Hungary),

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How institutions shape outcomes? 	majoritarian), Putnam (social capital)	populism (Brazil)
Economic History	Evolution of material progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why Industrial Rev in UK? • How colonialism shaped inequality? 	Great Divergence, Creative Destruction, Acemoğlu (inclusive vs extractive institutions)	Wealth gaps, AI disruption, climate economics
Political Thought	Ideas of justice/power	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why obey rulers? • What makes society fair? • Rights vs order? 	Hobbes (Leviathan), Locke (natural rights), Marx (alienation); Social Contract, General Will	Protest legitimacy, tech ethics, freedom debates
Elite Sociology	Power concentration & maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who rules? • How is dominance reproduced? • Democracy or oligarchy? 	Mills (power elite), Bourdieu (cultural capital), Pareto (elite circulation); Gatekeeping, Capital conversion	Lobbying networks, wealth hoarding, revolving doors

Design Notes for Presentation Readability

1. Visual Flow

- Use **row banding** (alternating light gray/white) for horizontal scanning
- **Icons** in headers (e.g., 💰 for Economy, 🏛️ for Politics)

2. Font Hierarchy

- **Titles:** Bold 28pt
- **Body:** 20pt (min 18pt for readability on big screens)

3. Key Enhancements

- Add **color-coded bars** left of each row (e.g., red for Political Economy, blue for Comparative Politics)
- Include **2-3 emojis** per row for visual anchors (e.g., 🏰 for "Power-resource interplay")

4. Data Compression Tips

- Abbreviate thinker names (e.g., "Acemoğlu" instead of full title)
- Use • instead of numbered lists
- Prioritize **active verbs** (e.g., "shaped", "reproduced")

Pro Tip: Add a "**Connections**" **column** showing interdisciplinary links (e.g., Elite Sociology → Mills' power elite mirrors Comparative Politics' regime analysis).

This table distills 2000+ years of thought into 5 rows while retaining analytical depth – ready for immediate use in your presentation.