

# MY410: Seminar Week 2

Chao-Yo Cheng

# Outline

- ▶ Introductions.
- ▶ Practicalities and "ground rules."
  - Principles for academic life during the pandemic.
  - Why MY410?
- ▶ Exercise: Intellectual puzzles.

# Introductions: About me

- ▶ Education and professional experiences
  - Undergraduate studies in Taiwan (2003-2008), Hong Kong (2005-2006) and Galway, Ireland (2007).
  - MA and PhD in political science from New York and Los Angeles (2011 and 2019).
  - Postdoctoral researcher in political science and computational social science, Tsinghua (2019-2020).
  - Fellow in international development and methodology, LSE (2020-present).
- ▶ Research interests: Political economy of development and institutions in multi-ethnic societies.
- ▶ Research methods: Computational, qualitative, and quantitative.

## Introductions: About me

- ▶ Energy poverty in rural India – a large-scale household survey across six states (*Nature Energy*, 2016).
- ▶ Election of criminal politicians and socioeconomic development in rural India (*Studies in Comparative International Development*, 2019).
- ▶ Political representation and inequality in electricity supply in rural India (*Journal of Public Policy*, 2021).
- ▶ Ethnic local autonomy and nation-state building in post-1949 China (book manuscript).
- ▶ Empowerment of ethnic minorities/indigenous groups and environmental conservation in China, Malaysia, and Indonesia (work in progress).
- ▶ Local politics of judicial reform and environmental governance in China: Evidence from court transcripts (work in progress).

# Introductions

Now let's hear from you all.

# Seminar groups

- ▶ Our seminars are all at capacity – given student numbers, changing enrollments will be extremely hard.
- ▶ If you have to move to another group temporarily (e.g., doctor's appointment, need to self-isolate), please **email your seminar teacher and the teacher of the group you wish to attend.**
- ▶ Attendance is compulsory. We take registers at each seminar. **If you have to temporarily move seminar, let your teachers know, and you'll be marked present.**

# Pandemic academic life: 4 principles

- ▶ **Active learning.** Keep in mind that our pedagogy is founded on *interactive* learning.
  - Come to seminars, having: (1) Watched the lecture videos; (2) participated in the lecture discussions; (3) completed the readings or other preparation for the week.
  - In class, be ready to: (1) Discuss with your peers and (2) feed back to the plenary.
- ▶ **Stability with flexibility.** We aim for stability, but acknowledge the need for flexibility.

# Pandemic academic life: 4 principles

- ▶ **Good communication.** We want to make this *fantastic*: Please be your own best advocate and give us feedback and constructive suggestions!
  - Course forum: questions? Others will have them too. Put them on the forum.
  - Office hours: Book on Student Hub (Tuesdays 12pm-2pm) – we want to meet you!
- ▶ **Safety.** We all want to keep you safe during your class but need to work collaboratively with you to make that happen!





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POLITICAL SCIENCE ■



## Look after yourself. Look after others.



Wear a mask



Wash or sanitise  
hands regularly



Test regularly



Cover coughs  
and sneezes



Get vaccinated



Let LSE know if  
you feel unwell

### Do you have symptoms?



High temperature, fever,  
shaking or chills



Loss of sense of smell, taste,  
or breathing difficulties



Dry cough

**Get a COVID-19 test, DO NOT go out, and you MUST self-isolate for ten days.**

**Thanks. Together we help make LSE COVID-secure.**

Campus safety, testing information and more: [lse.ac.uk/coronavirus](https://info.lse.ac.uk/coronavirus)

<https://info.lse.ac.uk/coronavirus-response>

# Why MY410?

- ▶ Why do you need MY410?
- ▶ What does MY410 do (and doesn't do)?
- ▶ What would you like to get out of MY410?

# Intellectual puzzles: A typology (Mason, 2002)

- ▶ Developmental puzzle.
- ▶ Mechanical puzzles.
- ▶ Comparative puzzles.
- ▶ Causal/predictive puzzles.

## Exercise: Trying out Mason's categories

- ▶ Read the abstracts.
- ▶ State the puzzle addressed by each one and **explain your choice in your own words**.
- ▶ Classify each article into one (or more) of Mason's categories.

## Exercise: Trying out Mason's categories

*Developmental puzzles* First, you might, for example, pose a developmental puzzle – **how and why did  $x$  or  $y$  develop?** The  $x$  or  $y$  might be anything, ontologically speaking, for example, racist attitudes, cultural imperialism, the American system of government, a mental illness, and so on.

*Mechanical puzzles* Alternatively, your puzzle might be about how something works or is constituted. **How does  $x$  or  $y$  work? Why does it work in this way?** Again,  $x$  or  $y$  might be anything – intimate personal relationships, a legal system, a penal institution, the human psyche, and so on.

*Comparative puzzles* **Your puzzle might be about what we can learn from comparing  $x$  and  $y$ , and how we can explain differences and similarities between them.** This could involve comparing legal or social institutions internationally, different cultural objects or artefacts, or groups of people with different sets of experiences, for example.

*Causal/predictive puzzles* You might be interested in causality, and pose a puzzle about **what influence  $x$  has on  $y$ , or what causes  $x$  or  $y$ ?** You might extend that into a predictive puzzle - what is the likely outcome of  $x$  or  $y$ , where  $x$  or  $y$  might be a social intervention or programme for example.

# Example 1: Evans (2020)

## The politics of pro-worker reforms

Alice Evans ✉

*Socio-Economic Review*, Volume 18, Issue 4, October 2020, Pages 1089–1111,

<https://doi.org/10.1093/soceco/mwy042>

**Published:** 06 November 2018



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### Abstract

This paper explores the drivers of pro-worker reforms in Vietnam. It shows how commerce, trade deals, aid and geopolitics strengthened support for higher wages, social dialogue and freedom of association. Strikes have triggered Government concerns about regime legitimacy. Manufacturers are also keen to resolve strikes and propitiate reputation-conscious buyers. Reform was further incentivized by TPP's stipulation of Freedom of Association, together with economic and geopolitical incentives to join TPP. Donor-supported pilots have not motivated reform, but are nonetheless important: enabling reformists to explore new ideas; iteratively adapt; garner evidence of what furthers their priorities; with which they can persuade anxious colleagues. None of these forces are deterministic. They merely stimulate debate, authorize experimentation and are used by coalitions to push for reform. By tracing the politics of pro-worker reforms, this study draws attention to drivers often overlooked by donors: strikes, commerce, and trade deals.

## Example 2: Galiani et al (2005)

# Water for Life: The Impact of the Privatization of Water Services on Child Mortality

Sebastian Galiani, Paul Gertler, and Ernesto Schargrodsky

Universidad de San Andres University of California, Berkeley and National Bureau of Economic Research Universidad Torcuato di Tella

Abstract

Full Text

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### Abstract

While most countries are committed to increasing access to safe water and thereby reducing child mortality, there is little consensus on how to actually improve water services. One important proposal under discussion is whether to privatize water provision. In the 1990s Argentina embarked on one of the largest privatization campaigns in the world, including the privatization of local water companies covering approximately 30 percent of the country's municipalities. Using the variation in ownership of water provision across time and space generated by the privatization process, we find that child mortality fell 8 percent in the areas that privatized their water services and that the effect was largest (26 percent) in the poorest areas. We check the robustness of these estimates using cause-specific mortality. While privatization is associated with significant reductions in deaths from infectious and parasitic diseases, it is uncorrelated with deaths from causes unrelated to water conditions.

# Example 3: Pierotti et al. (2018)

## Equality on His Terms: Doing and Undoing Gender through Men's Discussion Groups

Rachael S. Pierotti, Milli Lake, Chloé Lewis

First Published June 21, 2018 | Research Article |  Check for updates

<https://doi.org/10.1177/0891243218779779>

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### Abstract

Efforts to promote gender equality often encourage changes to interpersonal interactions as a way of undermining gender hierarchy. Such programs are premised on the idea that the gender system can be “undone” when individuals behave in ways that challenge prevailing gender norms. However, scholars know little about whether and under what conditions real changes to the gender system can result from changed behaviors. We use the context of a gender sensitization program in the Democratic Republic of Congo to examine prospects for transformative change at the interactional level of the gender system. Over nine months, we observed significant changes in men’s quotidian practices. Further, we identified a new commitment among many men to a more equal division of household labor. However, participants consistently undermined the transformative potential of these behavioral changes through their dedication to maintaining control over the objective, process, and meaning of change, resisting conceptions of equality that challenged the gender system. Because quotidian changes left gender hierarchy intact, they appear unlikely to destabilize the logics that legitimate women’s subordination.



# Example 4: Cornish and Campbell (2009)

## The Social Conditions for Successful Peer Education: A Comparison of Two HIV Prevention Programs Run by Sex Workers in India and South Africa

Flora Cornish ✉ Catherine Campbell ✉

First published: 12 June 2009 | <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10464-009-9254-8> | Citations: 66

☰ SECTIONS



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TOOLS



SHARE

### Abstract

Peer education is a community-based intervention being implemented worldwide as an approach to HIV prevention. However, its results are inconsistent, with little consensus on why some projects succeed while others fail. Considering peer education as an 'intervention-in-context', we systematically compare the context and the implementation of two peer education interventions run by sex workers, one in India and one in South Africa, which produced contrasting outcomes. In so doing, we aim to identify key factors in the projects' successes or failures that may inform future peer education efforts. The Indian project's relative success was facilitated (1) by a more stable and supportive social, material and political context, and (2) by a community development ethos which devoted significant resources to sex workers' involvement, ownership and empowerment, as opposed to a biomedical approach which marginalised sex workers' concerns. We conclude with lessons learned and implications for current trends in peer education.