

Political Economy at MIT

The field of political economy is one of the MIT's longstanding strengths; indeed, MIT is one of the few departments in the country to offer it as a separate subfield. "Political economy" has multiple meanings in the social sciences. At MIT, the term refers to the study of how economic and political systems are linked, and focuses on cultivating a deep understanding and mastery of various theoretical and empirical literatures and paradigms for analyzing state-economy relations. The field is methodologically eclectic, drawing on work anchored in the full range of methods and approaches, and the core political economy faculty span the other subfields, including American, Comparative, International Relations, and Methods. A core proseminar covers major bodies of political-economic thought and considers a range of economic, sociological, and institutional approaches to political economy. Beyond this, the department offers a wide range of more specialized courses in political economy. These include courses on the American political economy, the comparative political economy of the rich democracies, comparative political economy of the developing countries, international political economy, and advanced courses on other topics including among others trade, migration, and technology.

The Qualifying Exam in Political Economy

The purpose of the political economy qualifying exam is to test the breadth and depth of your knowledge of the field. Students are expected to demonstrate knowledge across the various literatures in political economy, including international political economy, the political economy of development, the political economy of the advanced democracies. All of these aspects are covered by our faculty in the courses they regularly offer (see below). All students are expected to have taken the core proseminal in the field (PE I). Beyond this core requirement, we recommend that you take as many of the other political economy courses as feasible. Inevitably, you will not be able to take all of them, so we advise you to consult the most recent syllabi of courses you have not had a chance to take.

Core Political Economy Teaching Faculty:

Devin Caughey
Volha Charnysh
Valentin Figueira
Mariya Grinberg
F. Daniel Hidalgo
In Song Kim
Evan Lieberman
Noah Nathan
Kenneth Oye
Ben Ross Schneider
David A. Singer
Kathleen Thelen

Political Economy Course offerings

Section I: Common Core Seminar: Theories of State and Society (offered every year)

17.100 Political Economy I: Theories of State and Economy

Section II: Topics in Political Economy (offered regularly)

17.150: The American Political Economy in Comparative Perspective

17.154: Varieties of Capitalism and Social Inequality

17.174: Historical Political Economy

17.178: Political Economy of Institutions and Development

17.198: Contemporary Topics in Comparative Political Economy

17.310: Science, Technology and Public Policy

17.320: Social Policy

17.424: International Political Economy of Advanced Industrial Societies

17.430: International Relations Research Seminar

17.490: Political Economy of Security

17.572: Political Economy of Africa

17.590: State Building

17.830: Empirical Methods in Political Economy

17.810: Game Theory and Political Theory

Section III: Discussion Groups and Seminars

Institute for Work and Employment Research Seminar Series

International Political Economy Speaker Series

Latin America Working Group

Seminar on State and Capitalism since 1800