

University of Cologne  
Cologne Center for Comparative Politics  
Summer Term 2018  
Course: The Political Economy of the USA  
Module: Basismodul Seminar Politikwissenschaft II (1336SPoWi2) (9 ECTS)  
Room: 3.206, SSC Building, Universitätsstraße 22a  
Date: Tue, 10:00-11:30 (weekly) and Wed, 17:45-19:15 (one-off: May 30)  
Instructor: Michael Schwan  
Contact: [schwan@wiso.uni-koeln.de](mailto:schwan@wiso.uni-koeln.de)  
Office hour: Tue, 16:00-17:00 (by appointment only)

### **Course description**

Whether it has been the financial meltdown of 2008, the contested debate about free trade arrangements or, most recently, the presidential election of 2016: the last decade has sparked renewed interest in the United States of America as both political and economic system. This course seeks to pick up this attention and provide a coherent overview of the interplay between politics, society and economy in the USA. Based on the fundamental assumption of asymmetrically distributed power resources and conflicting interests, the course will elaborate on historical and current trends in the development of the U.S. political economy. We will put equal weight on core concepts, which help us to understand crucial issues, and empirical analyses, unearthing causal relationships and driving factors behind important developments.

### **Requirements and examination**

As this an advanced course, basic knowledge of relevant theories, concepts and methods of political economy is assumed. Furthermore, familiarity with the United States as a case is an asset, but no prerequisite. Since the standard classroom language is English, participants should be able to read complex texts and make themselves understood. General interest in the topic as well as the willingness to prepare brief inputs and actively engage in discussions are a must. Final grading is based on in-class presentations and an empirical term paper (approx. 5,000 words), in which the participant answers a research question of his or her choice. The paper is preceded by an outline of the research design, to be discussed with the course instructor on an individual basis and handed in prior to the appointment. Submission deadline for the term papers as pdf file via e-mail is August 31, 2018. All papers are electronically checked for plagiarism.

Each paper has to include the following statement, signed and attached to the main text:  
<http://www.cccp.uni-koeln.de/sites/cccp/Lehre/EidesstattlicheErklaerung.pdf>

### Course outline and literature

The following plan provides a preliminary outline and a first look at the content the course will feature. An updated syllabus with detailed bibliographical information will be handed out in the first session. All texts assigned to individual sessions are going to be available via ILIAS. For each session there will be one mandatory and some supplementary readings. Participants are expected to thoroughly prepare the obligatory material as well as to have a cursory look at the additional texts. For general background information and overall preparation, the following books are recommended:

Eisner, Marc Allen (2013): *The American Political Economy. Institutional Evolution of Market and State*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. New York: Routledge.

Kollman, Ken (2017): *The American Political System*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. New York: Norton & Company.

Maisel, L. Sandy/Jeffrey M. Berry (eds.) (2012): *The Oxford Handbook of American Political Parties and Interest Groups*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Packer, George (2013): *The Unwinding. Thirty Years of American Decline*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

DATE	TOPIC
APR 10	Introduction: Why and how to study the political economy of the USA
APR 17	Power and class in the U.S.
APR 24	The Great Society and the U.S. welfare state
<b>MAY 01</b>	<b>Labor Day</b>
MAY 08	The break-up of the New Deal coalition
MAY 15	Wealth, income, jobs: the many dimensions of inequality
<b>MAY 22</b>	<b>Pentecost Break</b>
<b>MAY 29</b>	<b>No class: session postponed to Wed, May 30 / 17:45-19:15 / S 102 (IBW Building)</b>
MAY 30	Of sun and rust: uneven development across the USA
JUN 05	The U.S. in the global political economy: the case of free trade
JUN 12	Boom, bubble, burst: the financialization of the U.S. economy
JUN 19	Specifics of a growth model: finance culture and credit card madness
JUN 26	The new urban crisis: city's on the brink
JUL 03	To regulate or not to regulate: business power and the state
JUL 10	Parties and electoral realignments
JUL 17	Course recap and concluding discussion