Course Description: This course studies how governments allocate goods and services to identifiable localities or population subgroups. We first study the analytic underpinnings of distributive politics and then focus on two sets of issues. The first considers the electorally-relevant aspects of taxes and transfers. This includes whether taxes and transfers target specific politically-relevant constituencies or types of voters and whether incumbent politicians benefit electorally from such distributions. The second area of concern is the redistributive and equity consequences of taxes and transfers. This includes whether special interests capture a disproportionate share of goods and services coming from government and effective ways to counter elite capture.

The course is meant as a springboard for you to do your own research into some aspect of distributive politics in a country of your choosing.

Course Prerequisites: You will only be able to do the work in this course if you are familiar with statistical methods to analyze quantitative data. First year students in the Political Science Ph.D. program and students from other departments are welcome in the course if they have taken at least one prior course in statistics (covering material through multiple regression). The course might have been at the undergraduate level. If you are not sure if you can do the required work, please feel free to contact me prior to enrolling.

Course Objectives: At the completion of this course, you will:

1. Be familiar with important recent studies of distributive politics.
2. Be aware of a number of different theories relevant to distributive politics.
3. Have studied some models that provide micro-foundations for the analysis of distributive politics.
4. Have experience identifying data relevant to a theoretical question.
5. Be familiar with how to assemble a multi-level dataset to analyze distributions to select subnational units;
6. Have experience writing a pre-analysis plan.
7. Have experience serving as a discussant of another scholar’s work.

Course Format: The course is designed as a mixture of lecture and discussion.

Peer Review: You will build skills in this course by acting of a peer reviewer of the work of the other members of the course. This entails reading drafts of the pre-analysis plans submitted by all members of the class and serving as a formal discussant of one PAP.

Readings: The reading load is relatively light in order to permit you to do research on your own project throughout the quarter.

Readings use examples from countries around the world, crossing the distinction between developed and less developed countries.

You might print out a copy of each reading and bring it to class. You will not have access to an electronic version during class and we may need to study specific tables.

I have indicated the URL for articles. Book chapters and are (or will be) posted on the course website.

Statistical Software(s): Instruction in the course will, where relevant, use Stata. You may do your own data analysis in whatever package you are comfortable with (excluding Excel, which is not permitted). If you work in anything other than Stata — presumably, R — I will be less able to help you debug your code or evaluate the accuracy of your work.

Requirement(s): To complete the course for a grade, you will write a complete draft of a pre-analysis plan (PAP) that details a project you intend to complete. A memo with your proposed topic is due in the second week of the quarter and a draft of your PAP is due in the sixth week. Your final PAP is due Friday, March 18 at 6:00pm. Please upload your final PAP to the course Moodle site. Please work in LaTeX, and upload a .pdf version.

Course Policies:

- General (for auditors as well as enrolled students)
  - Please come to class meetings each week already having read assigned material.
  - Please bring written notes to class summarizing each assigned reading and be prepared to discuss every assigned reading.
  - Assume that your computer will be closed during class and in particular that you will not be able to review assigned readings on your computer during class.
  - You should take handwritten notes during class in order to retain the material covered.
  - If you are auditing the course, please inform me so you are given access to the course site.
- Please plan to attend all class meetings except in cases of illness. Do not attend class if you have a cold or the flu.

- **Pre-Analysis Plan**
  - Your main writing assignment for the quarter consists of a pre-analysis plan for a research project. In the PAP, you will lay out the research question, hypotheses, and the specific tests you intend to conduct. The purpose of a PAP is to write out the plans for a project prior to data analysis (and in many cases even prior to data collection).
  - A pre-analysis plan is a more polished and formal presentation of the proposal for the paper you plan to write than you would normally be asked to submit in a graduate seminar, but is not qualitatively different than any other paper proposal.
  - Your planned research may require you to collect original data in the future.
  - You will circulate the first draft of your pre-analysis plan in the fifth week of the quarter, when it will be peer-reviewed and formally discussed by one member of the class.
  - A particularly useful checklist of what to include in a PAP is available at the World Bank's Development Impact site ([http://blogs.worldbank.org/impactevaluations/analysis-plan-checklist](http://blogs.worldbank.org/impactevaluations/analysis-plan-checklist)). Your pre-analysis plan will likely omit some of the items on this list. For instance, it is unlikely that you will include a formal model in your project. You should adapt the guidelines as appropriate.
  - At a minimum, your pre-analysis plan should include a description of the data you will use and how you selected your sample, the hypotheses you will test, how you plan to construct your measures and variables, the equation(-s) you plan to estimate, and a plan for dealing with multiple hypothesis testing.

- **Collaborative Work**
  - You are encouraged to help each other during the course, to share expertise and information, and to work together on the proposed research project if you wish.
  - Students who decide to collaborate formally on a research project will co-author their PAP.
  - If you collaborate, you are required to set out in writing the nature of the proposed collaboration, specifying who is responsible for what part of the work and how credit will be shared in the near and far term. Although any collaboration is likely to evolve in unexpected ways, and to present unanticipated challenges, clarifying your expectations in advance with your collaborators is likely to prove helpful in reducing misunderstandings. You should pay particular attention to specifying how you intend to proceed if any part of the work done for the course is eventually used in an article submitted for publication. Please submit this material even if your co-author is not enrolled in the course.
• Grades
  – Materials are to be submitted on time to be given full credit. Please ensure that the timestamp for every submission is within ten minutes of the time due.
  – Final course grades will reflect class participation (25 percent) and the quality of work submitted (75 percent).
  – For your own protection, I do not give Incompletes. Please plan to submit your PAP by the final due date.

Replication, Transparency, and Research Ethics: All work you do will be held to the highest ethical and professional standards

UCLA Student Guide to Academic Integrity: As a student and a member of the University community, you are expected to demonstrate integrity in all of your academic endeavors.

Please carefully review the university guidelines regarding academic dishonesty. They are available at http://www.deanofstudents.ucla.edu/Portals/16/Documents/StudentGuide.pdf. Suspicion of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Dean of Students for evaluation and appropriate action.
SYLLABUS

Week One, January 6: Overview

This week, we begin with a careful reading of the BITSS Manual of Best Practices in Transparent Social Science Research so we are aware of professional and ethical parameters in which we operate.

We then skim four examples of pre-analysis plans to get a sense of the range of information and detail that is included. What do all the examples have in common; that is, what seems to be the minimum requirement for a pre-analysis plan? How specific and detailed are the plans? Why do you think there is such a range in the amount of detail provided? How much detail do you think is necessary to meet the underlying goals of a pre-analysis plan?

The goal of reviewing the PAPs is to help you begin to think about what you will do for this course this quarter. Other examples of pre-registered pre-analysis plans in political science are available on the EGAP website under the Registration tab (http://egap.org/content/registration).

Readings:


Week Two, January 15: Overview of Accountability Problems and Distributive Politics

The readings this week are meant to provide an informal overview of the basic issues that animate our thinking this quarter.

Due before class:
No later than Tuesday, January 14 at 6:00pm, you will make available (on the course Moodle site) a one-page memo (in .pdf) presenting basic information about your proposed project. Your memo should include: your name, project title, country (or other) setting, data source(s), data units and level(s) of analysis, and a one-paragraph statement of the theoretical problem or main hypothesis that you intend to investigate. In addition, please write one or two sentences about why the problem is important. All this information should fit onto a single sheet of paper (without using a font that is too small to read).

The Golden-Min review article provides a Bibliography of Studies on Distributive Politics in Countries Other than the United States which, although dated (it was released in 2012), may prove useful in your work. Please review it: http://www.annualreviews.org/doi/suppl/10.1146/annurev-polisci-052209-121553/suppl_file/pl16_golden_supmat_biblio.pdf.

The first half of class this week will be used to examine the Indian data and dataset assembly process that is analyzed in the Golden-Min article. The goal is to familiarize you with the steps involved in collecting and assembling data typically used in observational studies of distributive politics. We will examine how the data was collected, the files that cleaned and assembled the dataset, and the final data matrix, among other things. This will also be an opportunity to examine how to write and comment clean and reproducible code.

Readings:

Please read all the memos submitted by your colleagues for today’s class. We will discuss each.


Week Three, January 20: Formalizing Distributive Politics

This week’s reading provides a formalization of agency problems and distributive politics (called special interest politics by Persson and Tabellini). If you have difficulties following the models, keep reading, and write down what you understand of the structure of each. This is not a class in formal modeling, and modeling background is not assumed. Just do your best to figure out the importance of each assigned reading.

Readings:


**Week Four, January 27: Core and Swing Voters**

When and whether candidates and political parties target core or swing voters has been an on-going debate in political science. Is there a single right answer to this question?

*Readings:*


**Week Five, February 3: Cultural, Ethnic, Regional, and Partisan Favoratism**

*Readings:*


**Week Six, February 10: Discussion Day**

No later than Sunday, February 7 at 6:00pm, please make available a .pdf draft of your
PAP (on the course Moodle site). Each of you will be responsible for serving as the formal discussant of one of your colleague’s draft PAP. To prepare your ten minutes of remarks, please review the material on the instructor’s homepage, under the “Skills: How to Discuss a Paper” tab. In addition, please read all the other draft PAPs from your classmates.

Week Seven, February 17: The Political Returns of Particularism

Readings:


Compare the following two studies:


Week Eight, February 24: Redistribution, Equity and Elite Capture

Readings:


Week Nine, March 2: Aggregate Patterns and External Validity
Readings:


**Week Ten, March 9: Instructor out of Town**

Because I will be traveling this week, you have extra time to work on the PAP that you will submit.

***************

**Final Pre-Analysis Plans due Friday, March 18 at 6:00pm**