

| Montana State University<br>Department of Ag. Economics and Economics |   |
|---|---|
| Course:   | Professor:  |
| ECNS 394 – Economics of the 2024 Presidential Election<br>Fall 2024   | Dr. W. Stock<br>Office: 110 Linfield Hall<br>Phone: 406-994-7984<br>E-mail: <a href="mailto:wstock@montana.edu">wstock@montana.edu</a><br>Web: <a href="http://www.montana.edu/stock">www.montana.edu/stock</a><br>WebEx: <a href="https://montana.webex.com/meet/b53z413">https://montana.webex.com/meet/b53z413</a> |
| Hours & Location:   | Office Hours:   |
| TH 12:15-1:05 ABB 136   | Dr. Stock: T & TH 11:00-12:00, and by appointment, LINH 110   |

**READ THIS SYLLABUS. IT REPRESENTS A CONTRACT BETWEEN US.**

The amount of learning you gain from class is directly related to the amount of effort you put into it.

**Course Description & Course Objective:** This seminar provides a unique opportunity to examine the economics of the 2024 presidential candidates’ policy positions. Discussions will be led by faculty and experts from the Department of Agricultural Economics and Economics. The objectives of this course are (1) to apply the ways of thinking commonly used in economics to presidential policy proposals, (2) to understand the power and limits of economic models and tools in assessing policy proposals, (3) to describe how political and economic institutions impact freedom and prosperity, and (4) to apply economic reasoning to a variety of social and personal situations.

**Course Learning Outcomes:** After completing this course, students should be able to:

- Analyze, evaluate, and predict behavior and outcomes using economics concepts
- Demonstrate the importance of economic and political institutions
- Think critically about economics methods, applications, and assumptions

**Text:** Acemoglu, D. and J. Robinson, Why Nations Fail. This book is widely available (e.g., Amazon and other booksellers). A copy is available on our class D2L page.

**Class Attendance and Participation:** We will have class discussions each week. Class attendance and participation will count as part of your grade. The class is open to the public and the presentations before the election will be livestreamed.

**Class Preparation:** You should read the assigned chapter for each week **before** our class meeting. I expect the average student will need to devote at least 1-2 hours outside of class each week to be successful.

**Assignments:**

**Chapter Summaries (CS):** We’ll read and briefly discuss a chapter of *Why Nations Fail* each week. **By midnight on Wednesdays** in D2L, you should: (1) write a 1-2 paragraph summary of the chapter and (2) write and answer a discussion question about the material. I will randomly choose a student to start the discussion each week.

**Student Presentations (PS):** Students will give short in-class presentations during the last 3 weeks of the semester to focus on issues not covered before the election.

**Late & Missed Assignments Policy:** Late assignments will be penalized 25% per day. To account for unanticipated absences, your lowest chapter summary score will be automatically dropped when final grades are computed.

**Exams:** There are no exams in this course.

**Grading Policy:** Grades will be assigned based on attendance and participation, chapter summaries, and the policy paper.

| Assignment   | Points Possible |
|--|-----------------|
| Why Nations Fail Chapter Summaries: 15 @ 10 points each = 150 points |                 |
| Drop lowest score = -10 points                                       | 140             |
| Attendance 15 @ 5 points each = 75 points                            |                 |
| Drop lowest score = -10 points                                       | 65              |
| Participation 15 @ 5points each = 75 points                          |                 |
| Drop lowest score = -10 points                                       | 65              |
| Presentation   | 20              |
| Total  | 290             |

The grading scale is A: >=92%, A-: 90-91%, B+: 88-89%, B: 82-87%, B-: 80-81%, C+: 78-79%, C: 72-77%, C-: 70-71%, D+: 68-69%, D: 62-67%, D-: 60-61%, F: <60%. Grades will not be adjusted from this scale for loss of scholarship, loss of ability to graduate, loss of athletic eligibility, parent/pet/partner freak out, or loss of self-esteem, so please don't ask.

**There is no extra credit.** Spend the time you would have spent on extra credit learning the material in the first place.

**Grades of "Incomplete":** In accordance with the MSU undergraduate catalog, it is class policy not to give incomplete grades except for extreme personal hardship or unusual academic situations that are verifiable or certified through the Office of Student Success.

**Academic Integrity:** Please read and comply with the student conduct expectations contained in the *Student Responsibilities* section of MSU's "Conduct Guidelines and Grievance Procedures for Students," available online at [http://www.montana.edu/policy/student\\_conduct/#studentrespon](http://www.montana.edu/policy/student_conduct/#studentrespon). For this class, the homework assignments may be done in collaboration with other students, but simply copying another student's answers is a violation of academic integrity. Your answers to exams, quizzes, and discussion questions should be your own work. Violations of academic integrity diminish the value of a degree earned at MSU and cheating will result in failure on the assignment and/or the course and all other disciplinary sanctions possible.

**Use of AI:** In this course, you may utilize AI language models, including ChatGPT, as a resource to support your writing assignments. While the AI language models can help refine your writing, it is important to remember that it is an AI system and not a substitute for your critical thinking and creativity. If you choose to use this tool, apply it as a supplement to your writing process and do not rely solely on its suggestions. Ultimately, you are responsible for the content and quality of your written assignment. Therefore, you should critically evaluate ChatGPT outputs for accuracy, potential bias, and relevancy. It is essential to ensure that your writing remains original and properly attributed, including citing outputs or text generated by ChatGPT. Please see the [How to cite ChatGPT](#) in APA Style resource.

**Health-Related Absences:** Please evaluate your own health status regularly and refrain from attending class and other on-campus events if you are ill. MSU students who miss class due to illness will be given opportunities to access course materials online. You are encouraged to seek appropriate medical attention for treatment of illness. In the event of contagious illness, please do not come to class or to campus to turn in work. Instead notify me by email about your absence as soon as practical, so that accommodation can be made. Please note that documentation (a doctor's note) for medical excuses is not required.

**Diversity Statement:** It is my intent that students from all diverse backgrounds and perspectives be well-served by this course, that students' learning needs be addressed both in and out of class, and that the diversity that students bring to this class be viewed as a resource, strength and benefit. It is my intent to present materials and activities that are respectful of diversity: gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, religion, culture, perspective, and other background characteristics. Your suggestions about how to improve the value of diversity in this course are encouraged and appreciated. Please let me know ways to improve the effectiveness of the course for you personally or for other students or student groups. In addition, in scheduling exams, I have attempted to avoid conflicts with major religious holidays. If, however, I have inadvertently scheduled an exam or major deadline that creates a conflict with your religious observances, please let me know as soon as possible so that we can make other arrangements.

**Inclusivity Statement:** I support an inclusive learning environment where diversity and individual differences are understood, respected, appreciated, and recognized as a source of strength. We expect that students, faculty, administrators, and staff at MSU will respect differences and demonstrate diligence in understanding how other peoples' perspectives, behaviors, and worldviews may be different from their own.

**Disability Statement:** If you are a student with a disability and wish to use your approved accommodations for this course, please contact me during my office hours to discuss. Please have your Accommodation Notification or Blue Card available for verification of accommodations. Accommodations are approved through the Office of Disability Services located in SUB 174. [Please see Disability Services for more information by clicking here.](#)

| (WEEK)<br>DATES | TOPIC   | WHY NATIONS FAIL<br>READING                           |
|-----------------|---|---|
| (1)<br>8/22     | Introduction & Overview: Wendy Stock            |   |
| (2)<br>8/29     | Tax Policy: Christiana Stoddard                 | Preface & Chapter 1<br>So Close and Yet So Different  |
| (3)<br>9/5      | Housing Policy: Melissa LoPalo                  | Chapter 3<br>The Making of Prosperity & Poverty       |
| (4)<br>9/12     | Immigration Policy: Diane Charlton              | Chapter 4<br>Small Differences and Critical Junctures |
| (5)<br>9/19     | Agriculture & International Trade: Eric Belasco | Chapter 6<br>Drifting Apart                           |
| (6)<br>9/26     | Climate/Energy Policy: Nicole Karwowski         | Chapter 7<br>The Turning Point                        |
| (7)<br>10/3     | Education Policy: Andrew Hill                   | Chapter 8<br>Barriers to Development                  |
| (8)<br>10/10    | Macroeconomic Policy: Greg Gilpin               | Chapter 9<br>Reversing Development                    |
| (9)<br>10/17    | Labor Market Policy: Isaac Swensen              | Chapter 10<br>Diffusion of Prosperity                 |
| (10)<br>10/24   | Health Care Policy: Mariana Carrera             | Chapter 11<br>The Virtuous Circle                     |
| (11)<br>10/31   | Drug Policy: Mark Anderson                      | Chapter 13<br>Why Nations Fail Today                  |
| (12)<br>11/7    | Post-Election Discussion: Wendy Stock           | Chapter 14<br>Breaking the Mold                       |
| (13)<br>11/14   | Student Presentations                           | None  |
| (14)<br>11/21   | Student Presentations                           | None  |
| (15)<br>11/28   | Fall Break – No Classes                         | None  |
| (16)<br>12/5    | Student Presentations                           | None  |
| (17)<br>12/12   | Finals Week – No Class                          |   |

**Note: The information in this syllabus, including grading information, may be subject to change. Any changes to the syllabus will be discussed in class.**