



Course and Examination Fact Sheet: Spring Semester 2024

8,371: The Political Economy of the Car

ECTS credits: 4

Overview examination/s

(binding regulations see below)

decentral - Presentation, Analog, Group work group grade (40%)

Examination time: Term time

decentral - Written work, Digital, Individual work individual grade (50%)

Examination time: Term time

decentral - Written work, Digital, Individual work individual grade (10%)

Examination time: Term time

Attached courses

Timetable -- Language -- Lecturer

[8,371.1.00 The Political Economy of the Car](#) -- English -- [Rinscheid Adrian](#)

Course information

Course prerequisites

There are no formal requirements. An interest in political economy, public policy and the current transformation of the automotive sector is important, though.

Learning objectives

In this course students will:

- Comprehend the nexus between automobility, economic growth, and the state.
- Understand the relationship between climate change and the transformation of the automotive industry.
- Analyze the role of public policies in steering technological innovation.
- Examine the role of various stakeholders in shaping the future of the automotive sector.
- Investigate and present to the class a specific perspective or problem related to the political economy of the car.

Course content

The course deals with the political economy of the car - that is, the interaction between policy, politics, and economic choices and outcomes, with a focus on the automotive industry. The course draws mainly from Political Economy, Political Science and International Relations, but it goes beyond these fields by integrating perspectives from Behavioral Science and the interdisciplinary field of Sustainability Transitions.

The first part of the course introduces general perspectives on the (International) Political Economy of the car. In an effort to understand why the automobile has become such a dominant feature of today's culture and economy, the relationships between automobility, economic growth and the state are analyzed. Moreover, to enable a productive reflection on current trends in the automotive sector, the course deals with the development of global value chains in the car industry, structural dependencies, and regional structures of production including the role of developing countries in global production and consumption.

The second part of the course deals with the current transformation of the automotive sector. As transportation accounts for a quarter of energy-related CO₂-emissions worldwide, decarbonizing this sector is a key component in mitigating anthropogenic climate change. At the same time, the transportation sector is characterized by deep path dependencies that constrain change.



While the transformation of the automotive sector is underway, there is considerable heterogeneity in actors' preferences (both within and across jurisdictions), policy approaches, and corporate as well as economy-wide outcomes. To gain a solid understanding of the political economy of the car in times of transformation, we will discuss and learn about the following topics in depth:

- The role of the state in driving technological change
- The political economy of innovation in leading markets (including China, Japan, Norway, Germany).
- Preferences and the influence of organized interests and the public in the transformation of the automotive industry.
- Firm-centered perspectives, including firm-level innovation management, corporate product innovation, and the automotive aftermarket.
- The role of customers and market dynamics in the transformation of the automotive industry.
- Global value chain implications of battery-electric vehicles.
- The governance of autonomous vehicles.

Course structure and indications of the learning and teaching design

The course is organized as a weekly seminar. The first part (sessions 1 to 3) will be based on input by the lecturer and small group assignments. The aim of the first part is to provide a solid conceptual foundation. In session 2, presentation topics will be distributed to (max.) 12 student teams. The second part (sessions 4 to 11) will be devoted to gaining a thorough understanding of major trends and challenges relevant for the automotive sector (see course content). This will be based primarily on the required readings, students' presentations and interactive discussions in class. In addition, three experts in the field (guest lecturers) will share hands-on insights about specific topics.

Criteria for grading of presentations include coherence, conceptual clarity, analytical precision, usefulness of empirical illustrations, originality, and presentation quality. Students should share the outline of the presentation with the lecturer for feedback one week before the presentation date. For all sessions, active student participation is essential. Each student is expected to have completed the required readings in order to contribute actively to class discussions.

Course literature

At the beginning of the semester, required readings (typically 2 readings per session) will be made available on Canvas. Students are expected to carefully read the required readings before coming to class. The lecturer will provide additional readings.

Additional course information

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Examination information

Examination sub part/s

1. Examination sub part (1/3)

Examination modalities

Examination type	Presentation
Responsible for organisation	decentral
Examination form	Oral examination
Examination mode	Analog
Time of examination	Term time
Examination execution	Asynchronous
Examination location	On Campus
Grading type	Group work group grade
Weighting	40%
Duration	--

Examination languages



Question language: English

Answer language: English

Remark

Presentation (20 min) of a course topic

Examination-aid rule

Free aids provision

Basically, students are free to choose aids. Any restrictions are defined by the faculty members in charge of the examination under supplementary aids.

Supplementary aids

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2. Examination sub part (2/3)

Examination modalities

Examination type	Written work
Responsible for organisation	decentral
Examination form	Written work
Examination mode	Digital
Time of examination	Term time
Examination execution	Asynchronous
Examination location	On Campus
Grading type	Individual work individual grade
Weighting	50%
Duration	--

Examination languages

Question language: English

Answer language: English

Remark

Students can choose between 2 tracks

Examination-aid rule

Free aids provision

Basically, students are free to choose aids. Any restrictions are defined by the faculty members in charge of the examination under supplementary aids.

Supplementary aids

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3. Examination sub part (3/3)

Examination modalities

Examination type	Written work
Responsible for organisation	decentral
Examination form	Written work
Examination mode	Digital
Time of examination	Term time
Examination execution	Asynchronous
Examination location	Off Campus
Grading type	Individual work individual grade
Weighting	10%



Duration --

Examination languages

Question language: English

Answer language: English

Remark

min.5 comments (100-200 words) digital course room

Examination-aid rule

Free aids provision

Basically, students are free to choose aids. Any restrictions are defined by the faculty members in charge of the examination under supplementary aids.

Supplementary aids

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Examination content

Part I (presentation in groups): presentation topics will be defined by the lecturer (based on the contents of the course). From session 4 to 11, there will be 12 group presentations (max).

Part II (written comments in digital course room): Students provide comments or questions on at least 5 course topics in the digital course room. These have to be submitted at least 20 hours before the session during which the respective topic will be discussed. Comments/questions should be in the range of 100-200 words.

Part III (examination paper): Students can select one of the following tracks:

Track A: Research paper. The student develops a research question and writes a conceptual or empirical paper addressing this question (3,500 words +/- 10%, excluding list of references). The research question needs to be directly related to one or several topics covered in this course. The paper may eventually become the nucleus of a MA thesis.

Track B: Literature Review. The student conducts a review of the scholarly literature dealing with one of the topics covered in this course (3,000 words +/- 10%, excluding list of references). The aim is to provide a structured summary of the pertinent literature and to identify research gaps that future studies should address.

Examination relevant literature

A general reading list will be published in the digital course room at the beginning of the semester. The specific literature relevant for the term papers depends on the specific topic.



Please note

Please note that only this fact sheet and the examination schedule published at the time of bidding are binding and takes precedence over other information, such as information on StudyNet (Canvas), on lecturers' websites and information in lectures etc.

Any references and links to third-party content within the fact sheet are only of a supplementary, informative nature and lie outside the area of responsibility of the University of St.Gallen.

Documents and materials are only relevant for central examinations if they are available by the end of the lecture period (CW21) at the latest. In the case of centrally organised mid-term examinations, the documents and materials up to CW 13 are relevant for testing.

Binding nature of the fact sheets:

- Course information as well as examination date (organised centrally/decentrally) and form of examination: from bidding start in CW 04 (Thursday, 25 January 2024);
- Examination information (supplementary aids, examination contents, examination literature) for decentralised examinations: in CW 12 (Monday, 18 March 2024);
- Examination information (supplementary aids, examination contents, examination literature) for centrally organised mid-term examinations: in CW 13 (Monday, 25 March 2024);
- Examination information (regulations on aids, examination contents, examination literature) for centrally organised examinations: Starting with de-registration period in CW 15 (Monday, 08 April 2024).