

## **PSC 503: Formal Models of Comparative Politics**

Spring 2013 – W 9:00-12:00

Avidit R. Acharya

Email: aachary3@z.rochester.edu

Office Hours: W14:00-15:15 or by appointment

### **Description**

What are the consequences of different political institutions on various outcomes? What are the causes and motivations for mass political movements, and what is the mechanism by which they are organized? What are the political causes of underdevelopment? How are identities created, and what role do they play in politics? Why are redistribution and the size of government greater in some countries than others? This course will provide formal training that may (or may not) be useful in answering these and other questions in comparative politics. The course will *not* answer these questions.

The first few weeks will mostly be a review of topics covered in other classes, with new topics emerging as we go along. I will assign problem sets almost every week. Each student will do two in-class presentations. Dates will be set for these presentations after Spring Break. For one of the presentations, you must present an assigned paper (i.e. one on the syllabus for the next half of the course). For the other presentation, you can pick a paper from outside the syllabus, but please consult me for approval or suggestions. I expect high quality presentations. There will be a final exam on May 1. The problem sets will count for 40% of your grade, the presentations for 30% and the final exam for the remaining 30%. You can work with each other on the problem sets, but you must write your own solutions to receive credit.

### **Books**

There are no required textbooks because I will teach from handouts. But the following books are useful references.

Acemoglu and Robinson. *Economic Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*.

Persson and Tabellini. *Political Economics*.

Mailath and Samuelson. *Repeated Games and Reputations*.

Fudenberg and Tirole. *Game Theory*.

Kreps. *Notes on the Theory of Choice*.

Acemoglu. *Modern Economic Growth*.

## Topics

We will try to cover the following papers and topics in detail before Spring Break. We will go roughly in the order of the papers listed, covering about three per week. We may not get to all of them, skipping some if we fall behind schedule. You do not have to read these papers before class since I will be teaching them from handouts. (In fact, it may not be a great use of your time to read them at all.) If a model interests you after I teach it, I encourage you to only then go and read the paper. On (or before) March 20, I will provide a list of papers that we will cover after Spring Break.

### January 16

Meltzer, A. and S. Richard. "A Rational Theory of the Size of Government," *Journal of Political Economy*.

Lindbeck, A. and J. Weibull. "Balanced Budget Redistribution as the Outcome of Political Competition," *Public Choice*.

Acharya, A., J. Roemer and R. Somanathan. "Caste Politics, Corruption and Distribution in India: Voter Preferences and Policy Outcomes in Uttar Pradesh" *working paper*.

Roemer, J. "The Political Economy of Progressive Income Taxation," *Econometrica*.

### January 23

Acharya, A. "Equilibrium False Consciousness" *working paper*.

Persson, T. and G. Tabellini. *Political Economics*, Chapter 8: "Electoral Rules and Electoral Competition."

Persson, T. and G. Tabellini. *Political Economics*, Chapter 9: "Institutions and Accountability."

Persson, T. and G. Tabellini. *Political Economics*, Chapter 10: "Political Regimes."

Diermeier and Merlo. "Government Turnover in Parliamentary Democracy" *Journal of Economic Theory*.

### January 30

Acemoglu, D. *Modern Economic Growth*, Appendix C: "Dynamic Games."

Acemoglu, D. "Politics and Economics in Weak and Strong States," *Journal of Monetary Economics*.

Duggan, J. "Repeated Elections with Asymmetric Information" *Economics and Politics*.

Battaglini, M. "A Dynamic Theory of Electoral Competition," *working paper*.

February 6

Acemoglu, D. and J. Robinson. *Economic Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*, Chapter 5: "Nondemocratic Politics."

Acemoglu, D. and J. Robinson. *Economic Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*, Chapter 6: "Democratization."

Acemoglu, D. and J. Robinson. *Economic Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*, Chapter 7: "Coups and Consolidation."

Acharya, A. "Coordination and Development in Dictatorships" *working paper*.

February 13

Ticchi, D. and A. Vindigni. "Endogenous Constitutions" *Economic Journal*.

Dixit, A. and J. Londregan. "The Determinants of Success of Special Interests in Redistributive Politics" *Journal of Politics*.

Benabou, R. "Ideology" *Journal of the European Economic Association*.

February 20

Padro i Miquel, G. "The Politics of Fear: Control of Politicians in Divided Societies" *Review of Economic Studies*.

Shayo, M. "A Model of Social Identity with an Application to Political Economy: Nation, Class and Redistribution," *American Political Science Review*.

Sambanis, N. and M. Shayo. "Social Identification and Ethnic Conflict," *American Political Science Review*.

February 27

Dixit, A. and J. Londregan. "Political Power and the Credibility of Government Debt," *Journal of Economic Theory*.

Phelan, C. "Public Trust and Government Betrayal," *Journal of Economic Theory*.

Dixit, A., G. Grossman and F. Gul. "The Dynamics of Political Compromise," *Journal of Political Economy*.

March 6

Battaglini, M. "A Dynamic Theory of Public Spending, Taxation and Debt" *American Economic Review*.

Besley, T. and T. Persson. "State Capacity, Conflict and Development," *Econometrica*.

Acharya, A. "Insecure Property Rights," *working paper*.