Models of non-cooperative bargaining constitute a natural tool for the study of collective decision making in the presence of disagreement. Especially in applications focused on decision making in modern democracies, bargaining models have been successfully used in order to study political institutions. These institutions shape the rules of bargaining among political agents, and the set of likely outcomes. This seminar offers a rigorous introduction to the theory of multi-agent bargaining and related contributions from the applied game-theoretic literature on political institutions, their origins and effects. Maintained assumption is that agents are optimizers of some sophistication and behave in order to have their preferences prevail, possibly at the cost of efficiency.

This is a research seminar and depth of coverage will be emphasized at the expense of breadth. Each week we shall focus on a couple of selected papers. Emphasis on particular topics may vary with the configuration of class interests. Research directions will be discussed. Class participants are expected to take turns and present a good fraction of these papers.

Evaluation: Your grade will be based on class participation (15%), a class presentation 15%, assignments 30%, and a research proposal (40%).

Presentations: You will be required to present at least one of the papers covered during the semester on a topic that will be assigned ahead of
time. Preparing a presentation forces you to think seriously about the assigned topic and comprehend the structure of the argument and formal proof. Your presentation should include motivation for the research question, a clear statement of the model and assumptions, and a fair part of the basic proof arguments. You are evaluated on your comprehension of the paper as well as the quality of the presentation. You should contact me ahead of time for advice on the paper and to work through the specifics for each weekly topic.

Assignments: Depending on the suitability of the papers we cover, there will be a few assignments over the course of the semester. The goal of the assignment is to enhance understanding of specific models, and of modeling in general. Good formalism and clear mathematical statements are appreciated, but the emphasis is on the applied theory aspect of the exercise, i.e., understanding the model and solving it.

Research proposal: Ideally this should involve the development of a model on a question relevant to your own research, but might also be an empirical project under certain conditions. Sometime toward the middle of the semester we will schedule a meeting to discuss possible ideas and appropriate length and format for the proposal, depending on the nature of the topic you wish to undertake. You will present your proposal at the end of the semester.

Reading: Each week you are all expected to have read closely the articles that we discuss or your fellow students present. More comprehensive reading lists for each topic are provided for your convenience should you wish to follow a particular topic more closely.

Prerequisites: An understanding of non-cooperative game theory at the level of PSC 584 or similar is required for the course.

Schedule: Below is the list of topics and related readings. Naturally, this schedule may change as the semester unfolds.

Topic 0 Overview and logistics of the course

Topic 1 Multi-player Bargaining – Complete Information


**Topic 2 Government Formation**


**Topic 3 Political Rhetoric & Information**


**Topic 4 Legislative Organization: Committees & Seniority**


**Topic 5 Vetos & Audiences**


**Topic 6 Lobbying & Special Interests**

• Groseclose and Snyder. ”Buying Supermajorities” APSR, June 1996, 90(2), 303-315.
• Eddie Dekel, Mathew Jackson, and Asher Wolinsky. “Vote Buying ?: Legislatures and Lobbying.

**Topic 7 Bicameralism & Federalism**


**Topic 8 Political Parties & Nation States**


• Eguia, J. Voting Blocs, Coalitions and Parties, mimeo


• Levy, G. 2002. A Model of Political Parties, JET


**Topic 9 Bargaining Dynamics & Coalition Formation**

• Marco Battaglini & Stephen Coate.”Inefficiency in Legislative Policy-Making: A Dynamic Analysis.” AER.


• Kalandrakis, Tasos. Majority Rule Dynamics with Endogenous Status-Quo, mimeo.

**Topic 10 Bargaining with Incomplete Information**


