

Professor David Primo  
Office: Harkness Hall 318  
Email: david.primo@rochester.edu  
Website: <http://www.sas.rochester.edu/psc/primo>

Spring 2024, Mon. and Wed. 11:50 AM – 1:05 PM  
Office Hours: Tues. 11:00 AM – 1:00 PM or by appt.  
(Harkness Hall 318 or Zoom link on Blackboard)

## PSCI 238: Business and Politics

This Version: April 9, 2024

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

Consider this real-world scenario: You are the CEO of a major corporation, and a new US president takes office who has pledged to implement government rules that would hurt your industry. How do you respond? You may think this scenario refers to President Donald Trump, but he was hardly the first president to attack corporations (although his tactics were certainly unorthodox). In 2008, presidential candidate Barack Obama promised to enact a windfall profits tax on oil companies if elected, and in 2021, President Joe Biden laid out an agenda to take on "Big Tech." The lesson? Regardless of who is control of government, managers must incorporate factors outside of markets - including government, public opinion, activists, and the mass media - into decision making and strategy building. In this course we will use the tools of political science and economics to study how businesses affect and are affected by politics. In addition to studying how laws and regulations get made in the United States, we will devote several classes to corporate social responsibility, brand activism, and employee activism. Class sessions will be interactive and feature in-depth discussions of real-world topics and cases in industries including finance and e-commerce.

### LEARNING MODULES

PSCI 238 is structured as a set of learning modules. The learning modules have been designed so that you will find all the pre-class preparation materials, assignments, slides, and other material for each topic in one place. Professor Primo's goal is to provide a course structure that is linear, logical, and user-friendly, and that the result will be productive class sessions and a positive overall course experience.

### COURSE MATERIALS

Students are required to purchase a coursepack from Harvard Business Publishing. The coursepack is available at <https://hbsp.harvard.edu/import/1136651> (registration required). Other required course materials will be made available on Blackboard approximately one week prior to the associated class meeting.

### COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- **Exams:** There will be two closed-book, in-person exams in this course. The first exam will be given on Monday, March 4, and the second exam will be given on Monday, April 29.
- **Pre-Class Preparation (PCP) Assignments:** Most learning modules not featuring a guest speaker will include one or two short pre-class preparation assignments. The purpose of the PCP assignments (and GSQ assignments—see below) is to provide an incentive for you to do the pre-class work and come to class prepared. You will be assessed based on your highest 7 PCP Assignment scores, but you are encouraged to complete all assignments. Late assignments will not be accepted.
- **Guest Speaker Question (GSQ) Assignments:** In advance of classes featuring a guest speaker, you will be asked to submit a question for the speaker along with a brief explanation regarding the connection between the question and the pre-class preparation materials. You will be assessed based on your highest 3 GSQ Assignment scores, but you are encouraged to complete all assignments. Late assignments will not be accepted.
- **Independent Reading:** Students are expected to spend 50 minutes outside of class each week reading the *New York Times* or *Wall Street Journal* to deepen their understanding of how the themes of the course relate to current policy issues. Students are eligible for free access to the online version of the [New York Times](#) and [Wall Street Journal](#); details are in the links. Students will have an opportunity to share interesting articles relevant to the course as part of selected PCP assignments.
- **Submitting Assignments:** All assignments should be completed and submitted on Blackboard by 8 AM on the due date using the link in the respective learning module—no attachments. Students should save their work frequently.

## GRADING

- All exams and assignments must be completed independently.
- You may earn a total of 250 points in the course.
- Each *exam* counts toward *40 percent* of your course grade and is worth 100 points, for a total of 200 points across both exams.
- *Pre-Class Preparation (PCP) Assignments* collectively count toward *14 percent* of your course grade. Each assignment is worth 5 points. Your highest 7 scores are counted toward your course grade.
- *Guest Speaker Question (GSQ) Assignments* collectively count toward *6 percent* of your course grade. Each assignment is worth 5 points. Your highest 3 scores are counted toward your course grade.

## TEACHING ASSISTANTS

There are two teaching assistants in the course: Jong-Heum Chung ([j.chung@rochester.edu](mailto:j.chung@rochester.edu)) and Tse-Luen (Kevin) Wu ([twu35@ur.rochester.edu](mailto:twu35@ur.rochester.edu)). They are responsible grading the assignments and exams with Professor Primo's guidance. Students may email either of the TAs with questions about the course material.

## PROFESSIONALISM

Professor Primo strives to create a professional atmosphere in class where all individuals are treated with respect. To help achieve this goal, please make every effort to attend and be on time for each class meeting, silence mobile phones and other electronic devices, keep texting and other non-course-related activities to a minimum, and come to class prepared to engage with others and be open to perspectives that may differ from your own.

## INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

The reproduction or dissemination of course materials, including but not limited to assignments, exams, slides, pre-class videos, and audio or video from class meetings—electronically or through other means—is not permitted under any circumstances. The unauthorized use, reproduction, or distribution of course content constitutes an academic honesty violation.

## ACADEMIC HONESTY

All assignments and activities associated with this course must be performed in accordance with the University of Rochester's Academic Honesty Policy. More information is available at [www.rochester.edu/college/honesty](http://www.rochester.edu/college/honesty). As noted above, the unauthorized use, reproduction, or distribution of course content constitutes an academic honesty violation.

## GENERATIVE AI USAGE

Students may use using generative AI such as ChatGPT to complete PCP and GSQ assignments, but this is neither necessary nor encouraged. Incorrect quotations, fake citations, inappropriate references or citations, and all other errors due to the use of AI are the responsibility of the student and will result in point deductions.

## STATEMENT ON CREDIT HOURS

This course follows the College credit hour policy for four-credit courses. This course meets twice per week for a total of 150 minutes per week of faculty-led instructional time. The course also includes independent out-of-class activities including, but not limited to, reading the news to connect course themes to current policy issues for an average of 50 minutes per week.

Date	Topic (Note: This schedule is subject to change, except for exam dates. Blackboard will always have the most up-to-date schedule.)	PCP Assignment (Due by 8 AM ET)	GSQ Assignment (Due by 8 AM ET)
1. Wed. 1/17	Course Overview		
2. Mon. 1/22	Introduction to the Nonmarket Environment		
3. Wed. 1/24	Integrated Strategy in American Politics I		
4. Mon. 1/29	Integrated Strategy in American Politics II	Due 1/29	
5. Wed. 1/31	Nonmarket Analysis for Business I		
6. Mon. 2/5	Nonmarket Analysis for Business II	Due 2/5	
7. Wed. 2/7	Nonmarket Strategy: Formulation and Implementation I		
8. Mon. 2/12	Nonmarket Strategy: Formulation and Implementation II	Due 2/12	
9. Wed. 2/14	Lobbying I	Due 2/14	
10. Mon. 2/19	Lobbying II / Pivotal Politics and Nonmarket Strategy I		
11. Wed. 2/21	Pivotal Politics and Nonmarket Strategy II	Due 2/21	
12. Mon. 2/26	Nonmarket Strategy Application: Fuel Economy Standards	Due 2/26	
13. Wed. 2/28	Topic: Designing an Issue Campaign <i>Guest Speaker: Rob Shrum, Nexus Public Affairs</i>		Due 2/28
14. Mon. 3/4	Exam 1 (covers classes 1 through 13)		
15. Wed. 3/6	Topic: Trade Associations <i>Guest Speaker: Kyle Isakower, American Council for Capital Formation</i>		Due 3/6
16. Mon. 3/18	Regulation and Rulemaking		
17. Wed. 3/20	Topic: The T-Mobile and Sprint Merger <i>Guest Speaker: David Carey, former Executive Vice President, T-Mobile</i>		Due 3/20
18. Mon. 3/25	Corporate Social Responsibility and Brand Activism I		
19. Wed. 3/27 Pt. I	Corporate Social Responsibility and Brand Activism II	Due 3/27	
20. Wed. 3/27 Pt. II	Politics and Markets Project Event at 7:30 PM in Wegmans Hall 1400	Optional assignment due 3/29 at 5 PM (can replace a PCP assignment)	
21. Mon. 4/1	Corporate Social Responsibility and Brand Activism Application: PayPal	Due 4/1	
Wed. 4/3	No class meeting—replaced by Wed. 3/27 evening event		
Mon. 4/8	No class meeting—cancelled by the university due to the eclipse		
22. Wed. 4/10	Topic: Crisis Management <i>Guest Speaker: Richard Keil, Accenture</i>		Due 4/10
23. Mon. 4/15	Private Politics I		
24. Wed. 4/17	Topic: From the CEO's Desk: Dealing with Washington Politics and Policy <i>Guest Speaker: Dawne Hickton, Cumberland Additive</i>		Due 4/17
25. Mon. 4/22	Private Politics II	Due 4/22	
26. Wed. 4/24	Course Wrap-Up		
27. Mon. 4/29	Exam 2 (covers classes 15-26, except for 20)		
*There is no final exam in this course.*			