

Political Science 285: Strategy & Politics
Fall Semester 1999 ☎ Monday & Wednesday 2:00-3:15
Professor James Johnson → Harkness 324 ☎ x 5-0622
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Office Hours ☞ M&W 11:00-Noon *and* by appointment

This course is an introduction to rational choice theories and their uses in political science. It will address the logic of rational choice analysis in both positive and normative theory. The course is not concerned primarily with imparting the mathematical techniques of rational choice analysis, but with exploring the intuitive and theoretical issues that motivate any use of those techniques. The aim of the course is to provide students with a thorough understanding of the issues involved in constructing rational choice analyses. Although the course does not presuppose familiarity with either game theory or the mathematics needed to solve game theoretic problems, some prior knowledge of those topics will be an advantage.

Class attendance is *not* optional - if you need to miss class please be prepared to explain why. The course will be run primarily as a lecture. However, I actively encourage questions, interruptions, cries for help, protests of disbelief, etc. Nearly all of the readings for the course are from professional research journals and similar sources (as opposed to pre-digested textbook versions). Consequently, many of you will have occasion to partake in all of these forms of expression during the course of the semester. You will *never* be penalized for participating - even when this takes the form of vague complaints like "I've got no clue why we are reading this stuff or why it was written in the first place!" There are no recitation sections for the course. However, there is a Teaching Assistant for the course - his name is Mike LePore - who will hold weekly office hours and also will run review sessions during the course of the semester. I urge - indeed I expect - you to take advantage of the chance to talk to with Mike and myself during office hours.

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS: The first, most important, point about the written assignments for the course is that they must be on time. *I will not accept late assignments.* That said, I am a reasonable person; if you anticipate a problem with submitting an assignment when it is due speak to me *before* the assignment is distributed so that we can try to work out an alternative arrangement.

There will be three take-home exams to be distributed and due as noted on the schedule that follows. Each exam will count for 33% of your grade for the course. I do not grade on a curve. You can anticipate having to write approximately ten typed pages for each assignment. I will distribute exams during class on the specified days. With a single exception (the final assignment), each exam will be due one week after it is distributed. Each exam will consist of several specific questions that deal primarily with themes from the immediately preceding section or two of the course; the questions may, however, require that you draw connections to readings assigned during earlier sections. I preface each exam by a set of specific instructions

which we will go over in class.

REQUIRED READINGS: The required reading for this course is demanding both in terms of quantity of pages (approximately 150 per week) and in terms of difficulty. It is *essential* that you keep up with the reading. Indeed, I expect you to have completed reading assignments *before* the class in which we discuss it. The written assignments draw directly on the required readings. I can get very cranky if it becomes apparent that you are not keeping up with the reading. Required readings for the course are listed below in the order in which we will read them. Books (marked *) are available at the University Bookstore. The remainder of the readings are on reserve at the library with the exception of several readings (marked *JSTOR*) that are available at <http://www.jstor.org> - these you can read on-line or download to your printer.

I: Rational Choice Theory as Opposed to What?

Gerald Gamm and Kenneth Shepsle. 1989. "Emergence of Legislative Institutions," *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 14:39-66.

II: Modeling Strategic Interactions

Gary Becker. 1976. "The Economic Approach to Human Behavior." In *Rational Choice*, ed. Jon Elster. NYU Press, 1986.

Thomas Schelling. 1978. *Micromotives and Macrobehavior*. W.W. Norton. [Chapters 1 and 3].

John Harsanyi. 1977. "Advances in Understanding Rational Behavior." In *Rational Choice*, ed. Jon Elster. NYU Press, 1986.

Robert Clinton. 1994. "Game Theory, Legal History and the Origins of Judicial Review," *American Journal of Political Science* 38:285-303. (*JSTOR*)

III: Understanding The Possibility of Cooperation

* Michael Taylor. 1987. *The Possibility of Cooperation*. Cambridge University Press.

Calvert, Randall. 1992. "Leadership and Its Basis in Problems of Social Coordination," *International Review of Political Science* 13:7-24.

Thomas Schelling. 1978. *Micromotives and Macrobehavior*. W.W. Norton. [Chapter 7].

Rasma Karklins and Roger Petersen. 1993. "Decision Calculus of Protestors and Regimes," *Journal of Politics* 55:588-615. (*JSTOR*)

David Laitin. 1994. "The Tower of Babel as a Coordination Game," *American Political Science Review* 88:622-34. (JSTOR)

IV: Bargaining

* Thomas Schelling. 1960. *The Strategy of Conflict*. Harvard University Press. [Chapters 1-5].

Jon Elster. 1989. *The Cement of Society*. Cambridge University Press. [Chapters 2 & 4].

V: Voting and Social Choice I: Legislative Politics

Kenneth Arrow. 1983. *Collected Papers of Kenneth Arrow, Volume 1: Social Choice & Justice*. Harvard University Press. [Chapters 4 & 12].

Krehbiel, Keith. 1988. "Spatial Models of Legislative Choice," *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 8:259-319.

VI: Institutions Again

Randall Calvert. 1995. "The Rational Choice Theory of Social Institutions." In *Modern Political Economy*, ed. J. Banks & E. Hanushek. Cambridge University Press.

Barry Weingast. 1997. "The Political Foundations of Democracy and the Rule of Law." *American Political Science Review* 91:245-63.

* Jack Knight. 1992. *Institutions and Social Conflict*. Cambridge University Press.

Jack Knight. 1992. "Models, Interpretations and Theories." In *Explaining Social Institutions*. University of Michigan Press.

VII: Voting and Social Choice II: Democratic Theory

Gary Miller and Thomas Hammond. 1994. "Why Politics is More Fundamental Than Economics," *Journal of Theoretical Politics* 6:5-26.

* William Riker. 1982. *Liberalism Against Populism*. Waveland.

Jack Knight and James Johnson. 1994. "Aggregation and Deliberation: On the Possibility of Democratic Legitimacy," *Political Theory* 22:277-97.

VIII: Voting and Social Choice III: Minority Representation

Lani Guinier. 1994. *The Tyranny of the Majority*. Free Press [Chapters 4 & 5]

Nicholas Miller. 1996. "Majority Rule & Minority Interests." In *Political Order* ed. I. Shapiro & R. Hardin. NYU Press.

SCHEDULE OF ASSIGNMENTS

September	1 Introduction

	6 Labor Day - No Class 8 Gamm & Shepsle

	13 Becker/Schelling 15 Schelling/Harsanyi

	20 Harsanyi 22 R. Clinton

	27 Taylor 29 Taylor; Calvert

October	4 Fall Break - No Class 6 Schelling; Laitin; First Assignment Distributed

	11 Karklins & Petersen 13 Schelling/ Elster; First Assignment Due

	18 Elster 20 Arrow

	25 Krehbiel 27 Krehbiel

November	1 Calvert 3 Weingast;

	8 Knight (Book) 10 Knight (Book & Paper)

	15 Hammond and Miller; Second Assignment Distributed 17 Riker

	22 Riker; Second Assignment Due 24 Thanksgiving Break - No Class

	29 Knight & Johnson;
December	1 Guinier

	6 N. Miller 8 Review; Final Assignment Distributed

	10-14 Reading Period 16 Final Assignment Due
