Political Science 107 - Introduction to Positive Political Theory
University of Rochester Fall 2019
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308B

Course Description: This course provides an introduction to positive political theory, a rigorous set of tools that will help you view politics in a new way and challenge conventional wisdom in the process. We use these tools to address two broad sets of questions. 1.) In institution-free society (anarchy) how can agents obtain cooperation and, under what conditions might the construction of formal polit- ical institutions like states help achieve these outcomes? 2.) How does democracy emerge and, when it does, how are preferences aggregated by democratic institutions?

Structure of the Course: Because of the reliance on methodological approaches throughout the course, students will be required to submit (about 5) problem sets over the course of the semester. In addition, there will be two exams, a midterm that will take place around the middle of the course close to spring break, and a final exam that will take place at the end of the semester. The due dates of the problem sets and the exam dates will be determined depending on the course's pace. No late problem sets will be accepted.
Required Materials: Readings and problem sets will be posted on Blackboard.

Grading: Grading will be assigned based on the following scheme:

 Problem Sets (25%)

 Midterm Exam (25%)

 Final Exam (35%)

 Class Participation (15%)

Schedule:

1. Probability

2. Social Science Theories

   - James, C. (1990). *Foundations of social theory.* Belknap, Ch.1-2

3. The Ecological Fallacy

4. Causality

   - Angrist, J. D. and Pischke, J.-S. (2008). *Mostly harmless econometrics: An empiricist's companion.* Princeton university press, Ch. 1

5. Bayes' Rule

6. Models

   - Gibbard, A. and Varian, H. R. (1978). Economic models
   - Gilboa, I. (2010). *Rational choice*. MIT press, Ch. 1-3
   - Paine, J. and Tyson, S. A. (2019). Uses and abuses of formal models in political science. *SAGE Handbook of Political Science: A Global Perspective*

7. Conflict and Strategy

8. Bargaining

   - Fearon, J. D. (1995). Rationalist explanations for war. *International Organization*, 49(3):379–414

9. Conflict & Commitment

   - Powell, R. (2006). War as a commitment problem. *International organization*, 60(1):169–203

10. Conflict & Risk

11. The Principal-Agent Problem—Moral Hazard

12. The Principal-Agent Problem—Adverse Selection

13. Democracy, Representation, & Political Accountability

    - Manin, B., Przeworski, A., and Stokes, S. (1999). Elections and representation. In Przeworski, A., Stokes, S. C., and Manin, B., editors, *Democracy, Accountability, and Representation*, pages 29–55. Cambridge University Press, New York
    - Maskin, E. and Tirole, J. (2004). The politician and the judge: Accountability in government. *American Economic Review*, 94(4):1034–1054
    - Anderson, E. (2009). Democracy: instrumental vs. non-instrumental value. *Contemporary debates in political philosophy*, pages 213–27

14. Efficiency

    - Reinhardt, U. E. (1992). Reflections on the meaning of efficiency: can efficiency be separated from equity. *Yale L. & Pol'y Rev.*, 10:302

15. Discrimination

    - Goldin, C. (2014). A grand gender convergence: Its last chapter. *American Economic Review*, 104(4):1091–1119

16. The State

    - Carneiro, R. L. (1970). A theory of the origin of the state: Traditional theories of state origins are considered and rejected in favor of a new ecological hypothesis. *Science*, 169(3947):733–738

- Hobbes, T. (1651). *Leviathan.* 2009 Oxford University Press, Ch. 13-14

17. The Social Contract

   - Tyson, S. A. (2019). The strategic foundations of political sovereignty. *The Journal of Politics*, forthcoming

18. Terrorism

   - Kydd, A. H. and Walter, B. F. (2006). The strategies of terrorism. *International Security*, 31(1):49–80

   - Hoffman, B. (2006). *Inside Terrorism.* Columbia University Press, Ch. 1

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: This classroom respects and welcomes students of all backgrounds and abilities, and I encourage you to talk with me about any concern or situation that affects your ability to complete your academic work successfully. Students requiring accommodations should contact the Office of Disability Resources:
1-154 Dewey Hall disability@rochester.edu (585) 275-9049

Academic Integrity: 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:
http://www.rochester.edu/college/honesty/index.html

Grade Grievances: If you believe a grade you have received is unfair or in error, you will need to do the following:

1. Wait 24 hours after receiving the grade before approaching your TA.

2. Provide an explanation in writing for why the grade you received was unfair or in error.

3. If you believe your TA's response fails to address your claim of unfairness or error, you may write an appeal to the primary instructor. This appeal must include your original explanation to the TA and a written explanation for what is inadequate in the TA's response.