

PSC 238: Business and Politics

This Version: February 12, 2020

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this course we will use the tools of political science and economics to study how corporations affect and are affected by politics. We will cover a broad range of issues affecting the business world, including regulation, lawmaking, activism, and corporate social responsibility. Course meetings will be interactive and feature in-depth discussions of real-world cases and topics in industries including finance and e-commerce.

READINGS

There is one required textbook for the course: *Business and Its Environment*, 7th ed., by David P. Baron. Two copies of the textbook are on 2-hour reserve in Rush Rhees Library. Additional required readings will be made available in the Readings and Assignments section of the course Blackboard page at least one week prior to the course meeting during which they will be discussed. Shorter readings are sometimes combined into a single pdf file (“Reading Packet”). In addition to the textbook, you will be required to purchase a case for a nominal fee from Harvard Business Publishing. You can do so by clicking the link in the Readings item for that class meeting.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- **Exams:** There will be three closed-book exams in the course on February 18, March 26, and April 28. Exam dates are set in stone and will not change. Make-up exams are not given—exceptions are rarely granted. There is no final exam.
- **Analysis Questions:** On dates noted on the list of class meetings, you will be asked to analyze a case or answer questions about a set of readings. Questions are made available in the Readings and Assignments section of Blackboard at least one week prior to the due date. In order to receive credit, all questions must be answered and the write-up must demonstrate careful consideration of the readings. Assignments are due at the beginning of class on the due date and should be handed in on the table at the front of the classroom. Typed assignments are preferred, but handwritten assignments will be accepted. Assignments may not be submitted electronically. You may discuss the assignments with other students, but the answers must be prepared independently. *Late assignments will not be accepted.*
- **Reading Requirement:** In addition to the readings referenced above, students are expected to spend 50 minutes outside of class each week reading *Business Insider*, *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, or similar publications in order to deepen their understanding of how the themes of the course relate to current policy issues. All University of Rochester students are entitled to free access to the online version of the *Wall Street Journal*; see <https://wsj.com/rochester> for details.

GRADING

- Each *exam* counts toward *30 percent* of your course grade.
- *Analysis Questions* collectively count toward *10 percent* of your course grade. Analysis questions are graded on a credit/no-credit basis. You are required to turn in and be awarded credit for 6 assignments. If you are awarded credit for fewer than 6 assignments, your grade will be reduced proportionally. For instance, if you receive credit for only 3 assignments, you will receive a 5 out of 10 for this portion of your grade. Receiving credit for more than 6 assignments will not increase your grade, but I encourage you to do all assignments in order to be better prepared for class and for exams.

TEACHING ASSISTANT

- Runsong (Russell) Cui, rcui@ur.rochester.edu, Harkness Hall 305, Office Hours: Mon. 1 – 2 PM
- Russell can answer questions about the course material, exams, assignments, and grading.

PROFESSIONALISM

Professor Primo strives to create a professional atmosphere in class where all are treated with respect. To help achieve that 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
- come to class prepared to engage with others and be open to perspectives that may differ from your own.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

No photography, video recording, or audio recording of any kind is allowed during class. In addition, no reproduction or dissemination of course materials, slides, or lectures—electronically or through other means—is allowed.

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.

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 for 50 minutes per week; specifically, as outlined above, students are expected to spend 50 minutes per week reading *Business Insider*, *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, or similar publications.

Note: Blackboard will always have the most up-to-date schedule.

Date	Topic	Read Prior to Class Meeting (Readings other than Baron are on Blackboard.)	HW Due
1. Thurs. 1/16	Course Overview and Preliminaries	- No reading	
2. Tues. 1/21	Intro. to the Nonmarket Environment	- Baron, ch. 1 (pp. 1-16)	
3. Thurs. 1/23 and 4. Tues. 1/28	Integrated Strategy in American Politics	- Baron, ch. 2 (pp. 30-47) - Case: Amazon.com and the Amazon.com Tax (Baron, pp. 225-229)	Y (1/23)
5. Thurs. 1/30	Nonmarket Analysis for Business	- Baron, ch. 6 (pp. 132-140) - Case: Business versus Business (Baron, pp. 158-160)	Y
6. Tues. 2/4 and 7. Thurs. 2/6	Nonmarket Strategy Formulation and Implementation	- Baron, ch. 7 (pp. 162-182) & ch. 8 (pp. 195-211) - Case: Wal-Mart and Its Urban Expansion Strategy (Baron, pp. 218-220)	Y (2/4)
8. Tues. 2/11 and 9. Thurs. 2/13	Lobbying	- Re-read Baron ch. 8 (pp. 195-201) - Cameron, ch. 6 (pp. 1-19) & ch. 7 (pp. 5-13)	
10. Tues. 2/18	Exam 1 (covers classes 1 through 9)		
11. Thurs. 2/20 and 12. Tues. 2/25	Pivotal Politics and Nonmarket Strategy	- Baron, ch. 6 (pp. 152-156) & ch. 7 (pp. 171-172, 174-178) - Pivotal Politics Videos (Links on Blackboard) - Case: Federal Express and Labor Organization (Baron, pp. 188-189)	Y (2/20)
13. Thurs. 2/27	Trade Associations Guest: Kyle Isakower	- Reading Packet	
14. Tues. 3/3	Regulation and Rulemaking	- Baron, ch. 10 (pp. 264-276, skim 277-285) - Case: The Volcker Rule (Blackboard)	
15. Thurs. 3/5	Antitrust	- Baron, ch. 9 (pp. 230-238, 244-252) - Reading Packet - Case: The AT&T and T-Mobile Merger? (Baron, pp. 253-257)	Y
16. Tues. 3/17	Nonmarket Strategy Application: Fuel Economy Standards	- Baron, ch. 10 (pp. 272-273) & ch. 12 (pp. 326-330) - Reading Packet	
17. Thurs. 3/19	Crisis Management Guest: Richard Keil	- TBD	Y
18. Tues. 3/24	Nonmarket Strategy Application: Alcohol Regulation	- Baron, ch. 6 (pp. 139) - Case: Free the Grapes (Purchase via Blackboard)	
19. Thurs. 3/26	Exam 2 (covers classes 11-17)		
20. Tues. 3/31	Private Politics	- Baron, ch. 4 (pp. 74-91) & re-read ch. 7 (pp. 175-177) - Case: Shell, Greenpeace, and Brent Spar (Baron, pp. 92-94)	Y
21. Thurs. 4/2	Guest: Judith Reinsdorf	- Reading Packet	
22. Tues. 4/7 and 23. Thurs. 4/9	Corporate Social Responsibility	- Baron, ch. 20 (pp. 558-562; Fig. 20-3 on p. 566; 571-576) - Additional Readings on Blackboard	Y (4/7)
24. Tues. 4/14	Guest: Dawne Hickton	- TBD	TBD
25. Thurs. 4/16	Brand Activism	- Reading Packet	TBD
26. Tues. 4/21	TBD	- TBD	TBD
27. Thurs. 4/23	Course Wrap-Up	- No reading	
28. Tues. 4/28	Exam 3 (covers classes 18, 20-27)		