

PSCI 107

Introduction to Positive Political Theory

Fall 2021

Syllabus

People

	Contact	Office Hours
Instructor: Stu Jordan	stuart.jordan@rochester.edu	Thursdays, 3:30p-5pm 207 Lattimore Hall
TAs:		
Sami Gul	sgul3@ur.rochester.edu	Tuesdays, 10:00am-11:00am On Zoom at https://rochester.zoom.us/j/84186002716
Fred Gui	pgui@ur.rochester.edu	Tuesdays, 3:30-4:30 315A Harkness Hall
Jacqueline Park	jpark182@ur.rochester.edu	Mondays, 2:00pm-3:00pm 315A Harkness Hall
Maria Silfa	msilfa@ur.rochester.edu	Thursdays, 11:00am-12:00am on Zoom at https://rochester.zoom.us/j/96059614949
Oliver Sun	dsun6@ur.rochester.edu	Wednesdays, 2:00pm-3:00pm 109A Harkness Hall
Marton Szablo	mszabo2@ur.rochester.edu	Thursdays, 10:00am-11:00am On Zoom at TBD
Hongyi She	hshe@ur.rochester.edu	Tuesdays, 11:00am-12:00pm 109A Harkness Hall

Class Meetings

We meet **in-person** in Wegmans Hall Room 1400 on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 2:00pm-3:15pm.

Class meetings will be neither recorded nor broadcast. The instructor will contact students marked by the registrar as arriving late to campus to arrange temporary alternatives to class meetings, and will contact any students who have been granted exceptions from in-person learning on grounds of health to arrange alternatives to class meetings.

What is this course about?

Politics is extraordinarily complicated because political outcomes are never attributable solely to the actions of any one person. Instead, explaining political events requires us to account for the distinct beliefs and preferences of multiple persons, and then trace how the actions of those multiple persons combine to determine single outcomes. Positive Political Theory is a set of tools used by political scientists to depict, understand and evaluate processes through which the preferences, values and actions of multiple persons are aggregated into single political outcomes. Students in this course gain the familiarity they need with these tools to thrive in advanced courses in political science, and to deepen their understanding of the politics they observe and participate in their lives outside classroom.

How should I plan my time and effort to succeed in this course?

If you're already enrolled in the course, go to the course site on Blackboard. There, you'll see a link to "Learning Modules". Click on that link and open the folder for "Module 0". Watch the videos in that folder! They walk you through how the course works and how to find all the information, assignments and everything else you need for the course on the Blackboard site.

If you're *not* enrolled in the course and you want to watch these videos to learn more about the course, just email the instructor at stuart.jordan@rochester.edu and ask!

How does grading work?

The course is divided into 4 learning modules. As part of each of the four modules, you'll complete several homework assignments (called "checks-of-understanding") and one in-person exam during class time. Based on your performance, you'll get a score of between 0 and 1 on each check-of-understanding, and a score of between 0 and 1 on each exam. Your overall score for the course is then a weighted average of your average check-of-understanding score and your average exam score, with the check-of-understand average weighted by 30% and the exam average weighted by 70%. You are then assigned a letter grade for the course according to where your weighted average falls on the following scale:

Letter Grade	Your Weighted Average Score
A	Greater than or equal to 0.9625
A-	Less than 0.9625, greater than or equal to 0.875
B+	Less than 0.875, greater than or equal to 0.7875
B	Less than 0.7875, greater than or equal to 0.7125
B-	Less than 0.7125, greater than or equal to 0.625
C+	Less than 0.625, greater than or equal to 0.5375
C	Less than 0.5375, greater than or equal to 0.4625
C-	Less than 0.425, greater than or equal to 0.375
D+	Less than 0.375, greater than or equal to 0.2875
D	Less than 0.2875, greater than or equal to 0.2125
D-	Less than 0.2125, greater than or equal to 0.125
E	Less than 0.125

When Are the Exams? When are Homeworks Due?

The schedule below lists all course activities, including exams and homework deadlines. Note that homeworks in this course are called “checks-of-understanding”, and abbreviated as “COUs” in the schedule below.

As you consider whether this course is right for you, keep in mind that no assignment will be accepted late, and that alternative exam times will not be offered, except when required by an accommodation arranged through the Office of Disability Services or in the event of documented and extraordinary events beyond the student’s control.

	Week Of Monday...	What You’re Doing On Your Own Time	What We're Doing in Class
	...08-23	Watch vides and complete activities for Module 0 “How to Succeed in PSCI 107”	Learning how to plan and use your time to succeed in course; Class meeting on THURSDAY ONLY
M O D U L E 1	...08-30	All COUs for Lesson 1, due 8am Monday 09-06	politics=aggregation of multiple persons views into single decisions
	...09-06	All COUs for Lesson 2, due 8am Monday 09-13	Hard choices, aggregative judgements Examples with feedback from Lesson 1 published by 5pm Friday 09-10
	...09-13	All COUs for Lesson 3, due 8am Monday 09-20	Arrow’s Theorem Examples with feedback from Lesson 2 published by 5pm Friday 09-17
	...09-20	Self-assessment & practice for exam #1	Putting module 1 together Examples with feedback from Lesson 3 published by 5pm Friday 09-24
	...09-27	Take a deep breath and hug somebody	EXAM #1 in class on Thursday, 09-30
M O D U L E 2	...10-04	All COUs for Lesson 4, due 8am Monday 10-11	Shared resource dilemmas, utility functions, single-peaked preferences
	...10-11	All COUs for Lesson 5, due 8am Monday 10-18	Conflict in shared resource dilemmas Examples with feedback from Lesson 4 published by 5pm Friday 10-15

	...10-18	Self-assessment & practice for exam #2	Putting module 2 together Examples with feedback from Lesson 5, due 8am Monday 10-18
	...10-25	Everybody take a deep breath and have some ice cream!	EXAM #2 in class on Thursday, 10-28
M O D U L E 3	...11-1	All COUs for Lesson 6, due 8am Monday 11-8	Aggregating Choices: Simultaneous Move Games
	...11-8	All COUs for Lesson 7, due 8am Monday 11-15	Aggregating Choices: Sequential Move Games Examples with feedback from Lesson 6 published by 5pm Friday 11-12
	...11-15	Self-assessment & practice for exam #3	Putting module 3 together Examples with feedback from Lesson 7 published by 5pm Friday 11-19
	...11-22	Everybody take a deep breath and give thanks for the people you love	EXAM #3 in class on Tuesday, 11-23 THANKSGIVING!
M O D U L E 4	...11-29	ALL COUs for Lesson 8, due 8am Monday 12-06	Power vs. Justice (and uncertainty)
	...12-06	Self-assessment and practice for exam #4	Putting module 4 together Examples with feedback from Lesson 8 published by 5pm Friday 12-10
	...12-13	Everybody take a deep breath and go sledding	EXAM #4 in-person at final exam time

Academic Honesty

All the requirements of [the AS&E Academic Honesty Policy](#) apply to this course. In addition, the course has a set of very specific rules about *how* you complete the graded work for the course. Following these rules ensures that your performance in the course reflects your own grasp of the material, rather than someone else's. Suspected violations of these rules, or of any provision of the AS&E Academic Honesty Policy, [will be reported as required AS&E's policy](#), and could lead to severe sanctions. So before you do *any* work in this course, make sure you know the rules. Learn them by watching the videos in Module 0 on the course Blackboard site!

Masking During Class Sessions

The University is committed to protecting the health and safety of the entire community – students, faculty, and staff. For this reason, it is mandatory that everyone wear a mask in University buildings, especially while in the classroom and other educational spaces. For more information see the

[University's policy on masking](#). In addition, you must wear a mask appropriately (e.g., over nose and mouth) if you are attending class in person, and you must do this for every class session and for the entire duration of each class session. If you fail to do this, you will be politely reminded of the requirement and then asked to leave if you do not comply.

Students who refuse to adhere to requirement for mask wearing in the classroom will be in violation of the [COVID-19 Community Commitment](#) and will be referred to the Student Conduct system through a [COVID-19 Concern Report](#). Such referrals will lead to student conduct hearings and may result in disciplinary action.

Students who feel unable to wear a mask for medical reasons may contact the [Office of Disability Resources](#) to explore options for accommodations.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

The University of Rochester respects and welcomes students of all backgrounds and abilities. In the event you encounter any barrier(s) to full participation in this course due to the impact of a disability, please contact the Office of Disability Resources. The access coordinators in the Office of Disability Resources can meet with you to discuss the barriers you are experiencing and explain the eligibility process for establishing academic accommodations. You can reach the Office of Disability Resources at: disability@rochester.edu; (585) 276-5075; Taylor Hall; www.rochester.edu/college/disability.

Credit Hour Policy Statement

This course follows the College credit hour policy for four-credit courses. This course meets twice weekly for 3 academic hours per week. The course also includes 9 academic hours of independent out-of-class assignments.