

Professor David Primo
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<http://www.sas.rochester.edu/psc/primo/>

Spring 2022, Mon. and Wed. 11:50 AM – 1:05 PM
Classroom: Goergen Hall 101
Office Hours (Zoom): Tues. 10:30 AM – 12:30 PM or by appt.
Office Hours Link: <https://rochester.zoom.us/j/948872840>

PSCI 238: Business and Politics

This Version: March 17, 2022

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 of the readings, videos, assignments, and expectations for each topic in one place. Professor Primo’s goal is to provide a structure for the course’s workload that is linear, logical, and user-friendly, and that the result will be productive class meetings and a positive overall course experience.

COURSE MATERIALS

There is one required textbook for the course: *Business and Its Environment*, 7th ed., by David P. Baron. Additional 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 exams in the course. The first exam will be on Monday, February 28, and the second exam will be given during the final exam period on Tuesday, May 3. The exams will be open-book and open-notes (to be defined in detail in the exam study guides and at the beginning of each exam).
- **Pre-Class Preparation (PCP) Assignments:** Each learning module not featuring a guest speaker will include a short pre-class preparation assignment. The purpose of the PCP assignments (and GSQ assignments—see below) is to (a) provide an incentive for you to do the pre-class work and come to class prepared and (b) increase the weight of low-stakes assessments in your final course grade. You will be assessed based on the highest 9 of your 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 the highest 3 of your 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*, *Wall Street Journal*, or other reputable news source in order 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 *Wall Street Journal*; see <https://wsj.com/rochester> for details. Students will have an opportunity to share interesting articles relevant to the course during the semester as part of 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

- *Each exam counts toward 35 percent of your course grade.*
- *Pre-Class Preparation (PCP) Assignments collectively count toward 25 percent of your course grade. They are graded out of 10 points. Your highest 9 scores are counted toward your course grade.*
- *Guest Speaker Question (GSQ) Assignments collectively count toward 5 percent of your course grade. These assignments are graded out of 10 points on a credit (10 points)/no-credit (0 points) basis. The expectation is that any student submitting a question and associated explanation demonstrating that they have reviewed the pre-class materials will receive 10 points for that assignment. Your highest 3 scores are counted toward your course grade.*
- *All exams and assignments should be completed independently.*

TEACHING ASSISTANTS

There are two teaching assistants in the course: Jong-Heum Chung (j.chung@rochester.edu) and Fred Gui (pgui@ur.rochester.edu). They are responsible grading the assignments and exams with Prof. Primo's guidance. Students may email either of the TAs with questions about the course material.

PROFESSIONALISM AND CLASS NORMS

Professor Primo strives to create a professional atmosphere in class where all are treated with respect. To help achieve this goal, please

- make every effort to attend and be on time for each class meeting
- keep your camera on during virtual classes unless extenuating circumstances prevent you from doing so
- come to class prepared to engage with others and be open to perspectives that may differ from your own.

RECORDING OF CLASS MEETINGS

Recordings of class meetings will be made available on Blackboard (though this policy is subject to change). Students may not post, record, save, or otherwise use these videos for any purpose not directly related to learning the course material, completing assignments, or studying for exams. The unauthorized use of these recordings will be treated as an academic honesty violation.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

The reproduction or dissemination of course materials, including but not limited to assignments, exams, slides, videos, and lectures—electronically or through other means—is not permitted under any circumstances. The unauthorized use, reproduction, or distribution of course content—including but not limited to access or distribution via websites such as chegg.com—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. As noted above, the unauthorized use, reproduction, or distribution of course content—including but not limited to access or distribution via websites such as chegg.com—constitutes an academic honesty violation.

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 at 8 AM ET on Date Specified)	GSQ Assignment (Due at 8 AM ET on Date Specified)
1. Wed. 1/12	Course Overview and Preliminaries		
2. Wed. 1/19	Introduction to the Nonmarket Environment		
3. Mon. 1/24 and 4. Wed. 1/26	Integrated Strategy in American Politics	Due 1/26	
5. Mon. 1/31	Nonmarket Analysis for Business	Due 1/31	
6. Wed. 2/2 and 7. Mon. 2/7	Nonmarket Strategy Formulation and Implementation	Due 2/2	
8. Wed. 2/9 and 9. Mon. 2/14	Lobbying	Due 2/9	
10. Wed. 2/16 and 11. Mon. 2/21	Pivotal Politics and Nonmarket Strategy	Due 2/16	
12. Wed. 2/23	Nonmarket Strategy Application: COVID-19 Relief	Due 2/23	
13. Mon. 2/28	Exam 1 (covers classes 1 through 11, administered on Blackboard)		
14. Wed. 3/2	Trade Associations (Speaker: Kyle Isakower, American Council for Capital Formation)		Due 3/2
15. Mon. 3/14	Regulation and Rulemaking	Due 3/14	
16. Wed. 3/16	Business and Government Partnerships (Speaker: Dawne Hickton, Jacobs)		Due 3/16
17. Mon. 3/21	Nonmarket Strategy Application: Fuel Economy Standards	Due 3/21	
18. Wed. 3/23	The Nonmarket Environment of Equinix (Speaker: Emily Trapani, Equinix)		Due 3/23
19. Mon. 3/28	Private Politics I	Due 3/28	
20. Wed. 3/30	The Future of Trusted Information & Conflict (Speaker: Wasim Khaled, Blackbird.AI)		Due 3/30
21. Mon. 4/4	Private Politics II		
22. Tues. 4/5	Politics and Markets Project Event @ 7:30 PM in Wegmans 1400 (replaces 4/20 class; not covered on Exam 2; will not be recorded)	Optional assignment due 4/8 by 5 PM (can replace/count as a PCP or GSQ assignment)	
23. Wed. 4/6	Corporate Social Responsibility I		
24. Mon. 4/11	Corporate Social Responsibility II	Due 4/11	
25. Wed. 4/13	Designing an Issue Campaign (Speaker: Rob Shrum, MultiState)		Due 4/13
26. Mon. 4/18	Crisis Management I (asynchronous—no class meeting)		
→ Wed. 4/20	No class meeting; replaced by Tues. 4/5 evening event (22 above)		
27. Mon. 4/25	Crisis Management II	Due 4/25 (complete up to 2 PCPs)	
28. Wed. 4/27	Course Wrap-Up		
*Exam 2, Tuesday, May 3 8:30 AM–11:30 AM, Blackboard	Exam 2 will cover material from class meeting 14 on March 3 through the rest of the semester (except for class meeting 22). Students should remain familiar with the concepts and tools covered during the first part of the course, as these concepts will be applied in material covered in the second part of the course.		