PSCI 244: Irrational and Rational Choice in Politics
Semester, Winter 2018
8:30am-9:50am AL105 Tuesdays and Thursdays

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Office Hours: 10:30am – 11:30am Tuesdays and Thursdays

Contact Policy or Header Notes: Please contact the instructor directly by email

Course Description: This course examines a wide range of apparently random, puzzling, or even irrational choices in political life. For example, why do powerful dictators allow independent legislatures and parties to exist? Why are the frontlines of civil wars spared from violence? Why do the same people choose language to define their ethnic identity sometimes and religion other times? Using a simple framework of rational choices by individuals to further their self-interests, this course provides a unified explanation for these diverse puzzles.

Pre-Requisites: One of PSCI 100, 101, 110, 150

Course Objectives:
By the end of this course, students should:

- Be able to understand the basic concepts and theories introduced in this course
- Be able to apply these theories in the appropriate empirical context

University Regulations:

Cross-listed course:
Please note that a cross-listed course will count in all respective averages no matter under which rubric it has been taken. For example, a PHIL/PSCI cross-list will count in a Philosophy major average, even if the course was taken under the Political Science rubric.
Academic Integrity:  

**Academic Integrity:** In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility.

**Discipline:** A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offences, and to take responsibility for his/her actions. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about “rules” for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course professor, academic advisor, or the Undergraduate Associate Dean. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under Policy 71 – Student Discipline. For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students should refer to Policy 71 - Student Discipline, Policy 71 - Student Discipline http://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat/policies-procedures-guidelines/policy-71.

**Grievance:** A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his/her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances, Section 4, Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances, Section 4 http://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat/policies-procedures-guidelines/policy-70. In addition, consult grievances http://arts.uwaterloo.ca/student-grievances-faculty-arts-processes for the Faculty of Arts’ grievance processes.

**Appeals:** A student may appeal the finding and/or penalty in a decision made under Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances (other than regarding a petition) or Policy 71 - Student Discipline if a ground for an appeal can be established. Read Policy 72 - Student Appeals, Appeals http://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat/policies-procedures-guidelines/policy-72.

**Academic Integrity website (Arts):** Academic Integrity http://arts.uwaterloo.ca/arts/ugrad/academic_responsibility.html

**Academic Integrity Office (uWaterloo):** Academic Integrity Office http://uwaterloo.ca/academic-integrity/

**Accommodation for Students with Disabilities:**  
**Note for students with disabilities:** The AccessAbility Services (AS) Office, located in Needles Hall, Room 1132, collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the
academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with the AS Office at the beginning of each academic term.

If you are using Turnitin in your course:

**Turnitin.com**: Plagiarism detection software (Turnitin) will be used to screen assignments in this course. This is being done to verify that use of all material and sources in assignments is documented. In the first week of the term, details will be provided about the arrangements for the use of Turnitin in this course.

Note: students must be given a reasonable option if they do not want to have their assignment screened by Turnitin. See Turnitin [http://uwaterloo.ca/academic-integrity/integrity-waterloo-faculty/turnitin-waterloo](http://uwaterloo.ca/academic-integrity/integrity-waterloo-faculty/turnitin-waterloo) for more information.

**Texts:**
All readings will be made available electronically on LEARN

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**Course Requirements, Expectations, and Standards:**
There will be two closed book exams (midterm and final). Of the two exams, the one for which you received higher grade will be 55% and the one for which you received lower grade will be 45%.

**The midterm is on February 27 (Tuesday),** during regular class time.

**Please note:** Student travel plans are not an acceptable reason for granting an alternative examination time.

**Schedule:**

**January 4 Introduction**

**January 9-23 How To Fight? The Logic of Wars**


January 25-February 6  How to Bribe? The Logic of Corruption


February 8- March 1  Who Am I? The Logic of Ethnic Identities


Evan S. Liberman, Boundaries of Contagion: How Ethnic Politics Have Shaped Government Responses to AIDS, Princeton University Press, 2009 (Chapters One and Two)


March 6-20  What To Do If You Can’t Vote? The Logic of Life Under Authoritarian Regimes
Jennifer Gandhi, Political Institutions Under Dictatorship, Cambridge University Press, 2010 (Chapters One and Two)


March 22-April 4  When to Democratize? The Logic of Regime Change

Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson, Economic Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy, Cambridge University Press, 2006 (Chapters One and Two)

Carles Boix, Democracy and Redistribution, Cambridge University Press, 2003 (Chapter One)