

# PSCI 244: Irrational and Rational Choice in Politics

Semester, Winter 2014

PHY150, 11:30-12:50 Tuesdays and Thursdays

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**Office Location:** Hagey Hall 310

**Office Hours:** 1:00-2:00pm 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:** None

## **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, [Student Discipline http://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat/policies-procedures-guidelines/policy-71](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, [Student Petitions http://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat/policies-procedures-guidelines/policy-70](http://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat/policies-procedures-guidelines/policy-70). In addition, consult [Student Grievances http://arts.uwaterloo.ca/student-grievances-faculty-arts-processes](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, [Student Appeals http://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat/policies-procedures-guidelines/policy-72](http://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat/policies-procedures-guidelines/policy-72).

**Academic Integrity website (Arts):** [Academic Integrity http://arts.uwaterloo.ca/arts/ugrad/academic\\_responsibility.html](http://arts.uwaterloo.ca/arts/ugrad/academic_responsibility.html)

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

## **Course Requirements, Expectations, and Standards:**

### **Term paper:**

In this paper, you will be given **three theoretical questions**, from which you should **choose one** to address in your paper, illustrating your theoretical argument with empirical examples based on your own independent research.

In completing this term paper, you have two primary tasks. Firstly, **provide a full and accurate theoretical answer** to the question you choose. Secondly, select your own country cases, conduct independent research, and **provide empirical evidence** from these cases to illustrate your theoretical argument. This paper is worth 35% of your overall course grade. The detailed guidelines for the term paper will be provided separately as we finish some key sections of the course. The length of the paper should be 12 pages maximum, double-spaced. The paper is due on March 25. Late papers will receive a 5% grade reduction per day.

## **Tests & Examinations:**

There will be two closed book exams (midterm and final). Of the two exams, the one for which you got higher grade will be 35% and the one for which you got lower grade will be 30%.

**The midterm is on February 25 (Tuesday)**, during regular class time, at PHY150.

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

## **Schedule:**

### **January 7 Introduction**

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

Jeremy Weinstein, *Inside Rebellion: The Politics of Insurgent Violence*, Cambridge University Press, 2007 (Introduction, Chapters One and Two).

Barbara Walter, *Reputation and Civil War: Why Separatist Conflicts Are So Violent*, Cambridge University Press, 2009 (Chapters One and Two).

Stathis Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War*, Cambridge University Press, 2006 (Chapters Six and Seven).

#### **January 28-February 6 How to Bribe? The Logic of Corruption**

David Kang, *Crony Capitalism: Corruption and Development in South Korean and the Philippines*, Cambridge University Press, 2002 (Chapter One).

Ernesto Dal Bó, Pedro Dal Bó, and Rafael Di Tella, "Plato o Pomo? Bribe and Punishment in a Theory of Political Influence." *American Political Science Review*, 100 (2006).

Herbert Kitschelt and Steve Wilkison, *Patrons, Clients and Policies: Patterns of Democratic Accountability and Political Competition*, Cambridge University Press, 2004 (Chapters One and Four).

## **February 11- March 4 Who Am I? The Logic of Ethnic Identities**

Evan S. Liberman, *Race and Regionalism in the Politics of Taxation*, Princeton University Press, 2003 (Chapters One and Two).

Keith Darden and Anna Grzymala-Busse, "The Great Divide: Literacy, Nationalism, and the Communist Collapse." *World Politics*, 59 (2006).

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

Daniel Posner, *Institutions and Ethnic Politics in Africa*, Cambridge University Press, 2005 (Introduction).

## **March 6-18 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)

James Kai-Sing Kung and Shuo Chen, "The Tragedy of the Nomenklatura: Career Incentives and Political Radicalism during China's Great Leap Famine." *American Political Science Review*, 105 (2011).

Beatrice Magaloni, *Voting for Autocracy: Hegemonic Party Survival and its Demise in Mexico*, Cambridge University Press, 2006 (Introduction).

## **March 20-April 3 When to Democratize? The Logic of Regime Change**

Roger Congleton, *Perfecting Parliament: Constitutional Reform, Liberalism, and the Rise of Western Democracy*, Cambridge University Press, 2010 (Chapters One and Two).

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)