

Political Science 210: Introduction to Political Behavior
Fall 2006

<http://www.reed.edu/~gronkep/pol210-f06>

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Course Description

Political Science 210, “Political Behavior”, is one of four gateway courses into the study of political science at Reed College. The course is targeted at first- and second-year students, although more advanced students are welcome. Pol210 exposes you to the major approaches used by political scientists to understand individual political action, what is often called “political behavior”. This stands in contrast to approaches that focus on comparing political systems, or modeling the dynamics of international relations, or analyzing philosophical and normative arguments.

In this course, we focus on the dominant analytical approach in behavioral political science – rational or social choice – and its implications for how we understand politics. Rational choice, imported from economics, remains controversial in many quarters, but it is an approach that you will encounter frequently in social science readings and research. If rational choice is an important approach in behavioral social science, then survey statistics are one of its primary analytical tools. We spend a significant amount of time learning how to retrieve and analyze survey data, and understand its associated statistics. *Fair warning: if you have previously taken Econ 311, Math 141, or especially Soc 311, you may find this part the course very repetitive and you may wish to consider an alternative course.*

Our goal as a class is to get each other to a point where, by the end of the semester, we all have sufficient familiarity with social choice theory so that we can use it to critically analyze some basic puzzles in political science such as: *Why don't more people vote? Are riots an example of a collective choice process? Why do people choose the candidates that they do? Why are political campaigns often bland and vague? Why are successful public policies those that seem to satisfy no one?* The exposure to statistics is intended to allow you to easily access quantitative data which will let you test those theories that you derive from your theoretical approaches, be they rational choice, psychological, or something else; and also allow you to more easily comprehend quantitative material in your other courses.

This is *not* primarily a conference course. The materials often do not lend themselves to conference-based discussion. I have made specific provisions in the syllabus for sessions devoted to discussion. The class is small enough that participation should be possible even at other times, but there will be many sections of the course where I will be lecturing.

Guide to Readings and Assignments

Books: The following books have been ordered from the Reed College Bookstore. Five copies of each are available at the library reserve.

- Rosenstone, Steven J. and John Mark Hansen. *Mobilization, Participation, and Democracy in America*. Macmillan, 1993.
- Shepsle, Kenneth A. and Mark S. Bonchek. *Analyzing Politics: Rationality, Behavior, and Institutions*. New York: W.W. Norton, 1997.
- “University of Denver IDEASS Guide to SDA”

Additional Readings: Additional articles available through the printed reserve, the e-reserve system, and the JSTOR electronic journal archive. JSTOR in particular is a system that is useful to learn. See <http://www.jstor.org> or link from the Reed Library website for more information. JSTOR and e-reserves are available from on-campus connections or off campus via the proxy server.

Papers: Descriptions of your paper assignments will be handed out in class.

Paper Blurbs: At a number of times in the semester, you are required to turn in a short “paper blurb.” This should be a brief (no more than one page) description of the question, the theoretical approach, the evidence, and the conclusion of a paper we have read.

Problem Sets: These are written problem sets, handed out four during the semester. You may work in groups on the problem sets but each person must turn in their own set of answers.

Grading Policy

You will be evaluated on the basis of one short essay and two longer essays, a final exam, three problem sets, and class participation. Because all deadlines are announced well ahead of time, *I will not accept late assignments*. It is also **very** important that you turn in the problem sets, since they account for 1/3 of your grade. Grades are calculated as follows:

- Essays (3): 33%
- Final exam: 33%
- Short assignments, problem sets, paper blurbs: 33%
- Class participation: 1% plus or minus wiggle room

Schedule of Class Meetings

Day	Month	Date	Title/ Description	In Class	Reading	Due		
T	Aug	29	Introduction to the class. Stats 1: Introduction to the SDA Analysis System (Stats I)	Brief computer demonstration, Intro to Tutor; First writing assignment handed out.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hentoff, Nat. October 4-10, 2000. "Ralph Nader -- Not a Wasted Vote." The Village Voice. Online copy available at http://www.villagevoice.com/issues/0040/hentoff.php • Maxwell, Bill. October 22, 2000. "Serious blacks know that a vote for Nader is a waste." St Petersburg Times. Online copy available here: http://www.sptimes.com/News/102200/Perspective/Serious_blacks_know_a.shtml • Tomorrow, Tom. This Modern World. September 5, 2000. Cartoon is visible here: http://www.salon.com/comics/tomo/2000/09/05/tomo. • Majoo, Farhad. Oct. 31, 2000. "Vote Trade: The American Way?" Wired Magazine. Available here: http://www.wired.com/news/politics/0,1283,39860,00.html • From the <u>SDA Tutorial</u>: "What is a Variable", "Entering Variable Names", "Additional Options", "Computing New Variables" 			
Th	Aug	31	NO CLASS	Gronke @ APSA Conference in Philadelphia	(work on the writing assignment)			
T	Sep	5	Introduction to Rational Choice	First problem set handed out.	• Shepsle and Bonchek, Chs. 1-2	First paper	Rational Choice ↓	
Th	Sep	7	The Rational Actor Model: A More Technical Introduction		• Dixit and Skeath, <i>Games of Strategy</i> , Chs. 1-2. (Reserve: 1999 or 2004 ed.)			
T	Sep	12	Social Choice Theory and Arrow's Paradox		• Shepsle and Bonchek, Chs. 3-4			

Th	Sep	14	Conference Day Stats 2: Using SDA to examine the Gore, Bush, and Nader voters	"Was it Rational to Vote for Ralph Nader?" Discussion.	Skim: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dixit and Skeath, <i>Games of Strategy</i>, Ch. 15 "Strategy and Voting" (this may be Chapter 14 in the older edition). This is a good chapter to keep on hand for review. Paul R. Abramson, John H. Aldrich, Phil Paolino, David W. Rohde. "Third-Party and Independent Candidates in American Politics: Wallace, Anderson, and Perot" <i>Political Science Quarterly</i>, Vol. 110, No. 3. (Autumn, 1995), pp. 349-367. Can be found on www.jstor.org. From the <u>SDA Tutorial</u> : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Proportions & Percentages" "How to Create a Frequency Table" Recommended: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Joslyn, Johnson, & Reynolds (JJR). <i>Political Science Research Methods</i>. Chapter 3 and pages 307-317 	Paper blurb		
T	Sep	19	Spatial Models of Voting: Applications I	Applications to vote choice, legislative organizing, and budgeting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shepsle and Bonchek, pg. 82-114 only (Ch. 5). 	First problem set.	Spatial Modeling	
Th	Sep	21	Spatial Models of Voting and Applications II. Stats 3: Replication via SDA	M&M Game. Second problem set handed out.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Page & Brody (Benjamin I. Page, Richard A. Brody. "Policy Voting and the Electoral Process: The Vietnam War Issue" <i>The American Political Science Review</i>, Vol. 66, No. 3. (Sep., 1972), pp. 979-995), available at www.jstor.org. Green & Shapiro, 147-159. Dixit & Skeath, 524-530. 	Paper blurb		
T	Sep	26	The Prisoner's Dilemma & Other Examples of Strategic Action		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shepsle and Bonchek, 197-206 Dixit and Skeath, <i>Games of Strategy</i>, 79-89 (Reserve: 2004 or 1999). Dixit and Nalebuff, <i>Thinking Strategically</i>. Chs. 1, 2 (E-reserve). 		Game Theory →	

Th	Sep	28	Conference Day: Applications of spatial modeling. Stats 4 : Sampling, Estimation, and Standard Errors	Mid-term assignment handed out.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jenkins (Jeffrey Jenkins. "Examining the Bonding Effects of Party: A Comparative Analysis of Roll-Call Voting in the U.S. and Confederate Houses". <i>American Journal of Political Science</i>, Vol. 43, No. 4. (Oct., 1999), pp. 1144-1165) Jeffery A. Jenkins, Brian R. Sala. "The Spatial Theory of Voting and the Presidential Election of 1824." <i>American Journal of Political Science</i>, Vol. 42, No. 4. (Oct., 1998), pp. 1157-1179). Recommended: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> JJR: pages 318-333 	Paper blurb			
T	Oct	3	Solving the Dilemma? When Cooperation Emerges in Competitive Settings		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shepsle and Bonchek, Ch. 8, p. 207-219. Axelrod, Robert. <i>The Evolution of Cooperation</i>. Chs. 1, 2, 4. Dixit and Nalebuff. <i>Thinking Strategically</i>, Ch. 4. 	Second problem set			
Th	Oct	5	Research Applications of PD: Political Order in Nuclear Brinkmanship and in Hobbes's Leviathan.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> S. Plous. "The Nuclear Arms Race: Prisoner's Dilemma or Perceptual Dilemma?" <i>Journal of Peace Research</i>, Vol. 30, No. 2. (May, 1993), pp. 163-179 Russell Hardin. "Hobbesian Political Order" <i>Political Theory</i>, Vol. 19, No. 2. (May, 1991), pp. 156-180. [Both available on JSTOR]	Paper blurb			
T	Oct	10	"The Logic of Political (non)Participation".		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hinich, Melvin and Michael Munger. "The Voting Decision and Collective Action." Chapter 7 in <i>Analytical Politics</i>. Aldrich, John. 1993. "Rational Choice and Turnout." <i>American Journal of Political Science</i>. 37(1): 246-278. Available on JSTOR. Green & Shapiro, Ch. 4. 		Political Participation: Theory	Political Participation	
Th	Oct	12	Stats 5: Basic Bivariate Statistics	Lecture.	Required, <u>SDA Tutorial</u> : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "How to Create a Cross-Tabulation Table" "More about Cross-Tabulation Tables" "Comparing Means" "More about Comparing Means" Recommended: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> JJR: pages 338-368 	Mid-term paper due			
T	Oct	17	NO CLASS	Fall Break					
Th	Oct	19	NO CLASS						

T	Oct	24	Mancus Olson: "Logic of Collective Action" (or inaction?) and its application to political participation		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mancur Olson. <i>The Logic of Collective Action</i>. Ch. 1, p. 6-52. • Shepsle and Bonchek, Ch. 9. 		Political Participation: Individual Action	
Th	Oct	26	The Tragedy of the Commons	Third problem set handed out.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hardin, Garrett. "The Tragedy of the Commons," <i>Science</i>, 162 (1968): 1243-1248. Available all over the web. Try: http://www.dieoff.org/page95.htm. [Need more on environment, or commons, or collective action.]	Paper Blurb		
T	Oct	31	New Institutionalism	Public Goods, Externalities, & Political Science's Solution to Social Choice Problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shepsle and Bonchek, Ch. 10-12, 14 		Political Participation: Choice Problems	
Th	Nov	2	Stats 6: Regression	Lecture	Required in <u>SDA Tutorial</u> : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Correlation" • "Regression Analysis" • "Cause and Effect" Recommended (one or the other): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JJR: 369-385 • Berry & Sanders, Chapters 2-4 	Third problem set.		
T	Nov	7	Who Participates in the US? The Empirical Evidence	Second paper assignment handed out.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rosenstone and Hansen, Chs. 1-3 		Political Participation: Individuals vs. Institutions	
Th	Nov	9	Who Participates - Take 2: Individual vs. Institutional Effects	Turnout examples from 2000.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rosenstone and Hansen, Chs. 4 - 6 			
T	Nov	14	Increasing Political Participation: A Job for Institutions or Individuals?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rosenstone and Hansen, Chs. 7 & 8. 	Topic for second paper.	Using SDA and NES	
Th	Nov	16	Class Computer Session: Presenting Your Results I		No readings; active participation in computer sessions will be critical to your second paper			
T	Nov	21	Class Computer Session: Presenting Your Results II		No readings; active participation in computer sessions will be critical to your second paper			

W	Nov	22	Second paper due today by noon.					
Th	Nov	23	NO CLASS	Thanksgiving				
T	Nov	28	Continuing Divisions within the Discipline		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Almond, Gabriel. A Discipline Divided. Ch 1: "Separate Tables, Schools, and Sects in Political Science." J Tobin Grant, "What Divides Us? The Image and Organization of Political Science." <i>PS: Political Science and Politics</i>, Vol. 38, No 3 (July 2005). Available online at: http://www.apsanet.org/imgtest/379-386.pdf. 	The Discipline of Political Science		
Th	Nov	30	What is Political Science? Reflections from Two Practitioners		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kramer, Gerald. "Political Science as Science" MacRae, Duncan. "The Science of Politics and its Limits" (Both from <i>Political Science: The Science of Politics</i> . 1986, Agathon.)		Paper Blurb	
T	Dec	5	Closing Thoughts	Political Science and 9/11; The Liberal Ideal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Larry Diamond, "What Political Science Owes the World." Available at http://www.apsanet.org/imgtest/PSOnlineDiamond911.pdf. Root, Michael. "The Liberal Ideal." Chapter 1 in <i>Philosophy of the Social Sciences</i>. 			