

Political Science 210: Introduction to Political Behavior

Fall 2010

<https://moodle.reed.edu/course/view.php?id=677>

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Hours: TBA

Course Description

Political Science 210 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 or what is often called “political behavior.”¹ 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 and texts.

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.² 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 to understand its associated statistics.

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 to a point where, by the end of the semester, every student has sufficient familiarity and comfort with social choice theory so that he or she can use it to identify and critically analyze some basic puzzles in political science that many in the discipline argue can be productively explored with rational choice theory, such as:

Why don't more people vote? Why do more people vote for President than for School Board? Are riots and revolutions examples of rational action? Why have

¹ “Individuals” in this context refers to any individual acting in a political context. This may be an individual citizen deciding whether to turn out to vote, participate in a rally, or contribute to a political cause. However, it includes individual members of Congress deciding upon the content of legislation, an interest group leader trying to decide on political strategies, a farmer trying to decide whether to obey an environmental regulation, or even a leader of a nation getting ready to enter treaty negotiations.

² There are other competing accounts of political behavior, including emotions or “affect,” genetic predispositions, adherence to social expectations or cultural norms, “mob” psychology, etc. The rational choice account offered in this course is not intended to exclude other competing accounts.

fisheries collapsed worldwide and how can we best protect them? If everyone says they support a particular cause, why do interest groups struggle to raise money? Why is it smart politics to be purposely bland and vague?

We use survey data and statistics in this course as an empirical tool—not the only empirical tool, but a very important empirical tool—that you can use to test your hypotheses about political behavior (whether those hypotheses come from rational choice, psychological theory, or something else). Early exposure to quantitative material will also help you as you encounter this material in upper division courses and as you write your thesis.

This course is a mix of lecture and conference. Some of 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 lecturing will be necessary.

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.

- Shepsle, Kenneth A. and Mark S. Bonchek. *Analyzing Politics: Rationality, Behavior, and Institutions*. New York: W.W. Norton, 1997 (there is a second edition of this book which has problem sets, but it is OK to use the first edition).
- Rosenstone, Stephen J. and John Mark Hansen. *Participation, Mobilization, and American Democracy*. New York: Macmillan.
- Olson, Mancur. *The Logic of Collective Action*.
- “University of Denver IDEAS Guide to SDA” Photocopy available at the bookstore.

Additional Readings: Most readings are either linked from the online syllabus or are in PDF from the Moodle page for this course. Additional articles are available through the JSTOR electronic journal archive and other electronic databases. 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 (see <http://www.reed.edu/cis/help/proxy-overview.html> for information on setting up your web browser to use the proxy).

Even though many of the readings are in PDF format, it is important that you print off the articles for this class. I will not allow the use of laptops in class. It is too distracting to the professor and to the students around you.

Assessment Policy

There are three main sets of assignments in this course. 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 are the building blocks for your exams and papers. All assignments and deadlines are listed on the schedule of class meetings.

Papers: You will be assigned one short paper and two longer papers.

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 three written problem sets, handed out during the semester. You may work in groups on the problem sets but each person must turn in their own set of answers.

Citation and Plagiarism

A major goal of this course is to encourage good reading, research, and citation habits. Good research requires good documentation of sources and the ability to put one’s own analysis and thoughts into a paper rather than relying on others. When in doubt as to whether you should cite something, always do it. Citations are required for ideas as well as facts, and are imperative even if you are not directly quoting authors. Make sure that you provide as specific a citation as possible; if an author discusses an idea in one section or one page, cite the specific section or page instead of the full article or book. I usually recommend that students use in-text author-date citation with full Chicago Manual of Style citations; see their Citation Quick Guide: <<http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools/citationguide.html>>. However, style is less important than the cites being present. If you use an idea or a fact without attribution, you are plagiarizing someone else’s work. Plagiarism and cheating are violations of academic integrity and thus violations of Reed’s Honor Principle. As noted in Reed’s academic conduct policy, such violations will result in disciplinary actions, including suspension or permanent dismissal from the College. Plagiarism is submitting a piece of work which in part or in whole is not entirely the student’s own work without attributing those same portions to their correct source. For examples of plagiarism and how to avoid it, see <<http://www.csub.edu/ssric-trd/howto/plagiarism.htm>> For more information on Reed’s policies see: <<http://www.reed.edu/academic/gbook/comm-pol/acad-conduct.html>>.

Accommodations

If you’d like to request academic accommodations due to a disability, please contact Learning Resources Director Libby Rapkoch, Psy.D., Dorothy Johansen House, 503-517-7921, rapkoche@reed.edu. If you have a letter from Student Services, please let me know so we can discuss those accommodations. Please try to be pro-active in dealing with the Dean of Student Services. It is hard to provide accommodations after the fact.

Schedule of Class Meetings

Day	Month	Date	Title/ Description	In Class	Readings	Due	
T	Aug	31	Introduction to the class. Political Science in the Social Sciences	First paper assignment distributed			Introduction to Empirical Political Science
Th	Sep	2	NO CLASS: APSA Meeting in DC	Work on your first paper assignment.	<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 		
T	Sep	7	The Rational Actor Model: A Gentle Introduction		Shepsle and Bonchek, Chs 1-2		
Th	Sep	9	The Rational Choice Model: A More Technical Introduction		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dixit and Skeath, <i>Games of Strategy</i>, Chs. 1-2. (Reserve: 2004 or 2008 ed.) 	First memo due today!	Rational Choice ↓
T	Sep	14	Social Choice Theory and Arrow's Paradox Introduction to SDA	First problem set handed out.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shepsle and Bonchek, Chs. 3-4 • Guide to SDA: "What is a Variable" 		

Th	Sep	16	Conference Day: <i>How do voters decide when faced with more than two choices and more than two dimensions: The Wallace, Perot, and Anderson candidacies.</i>		Skim: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dixit and Skeath, <i>Games of Strategy</i>, Ch. 15 in old ed, Ch 16 in 2008 ed. "Strategy and Voting" 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. 		
T	Sep	21	No Class, Prof. Gronke in Lille for study abroad evaluation				
Th	Sep	23	Spatial Models of Voting: Applications I	Applications to vote choice, legislative organizing, and budgeting.	Shepsle and Bonchek, pg. 82-114 only (Ch. 5).		Spatial Modeling ↓
Th Fr	Sep	23 24	Laboratory Sessions Navigating SDA		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Class Data Codebook Guide to SDA: "Proportions and Percentages," "How to Create a Frequency Table," "How to create a Cross-Tabulation Table." 		
T	Sep	28	Spatial Models of Voting and Applications II. <i>Why did some people think Nixon was a liberal?</i>	Handout: <i>What is a paper blurb?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Benjamin I. Page and 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 Ch 16 on "Median Voter Theorem" 639-647 (2008) Ch. 15 524-530 (2004). 	First problem set due today!	

Th	Sep	30	In Class Laboratory Session: <i>The 2008 Presidential contest: was it about race or about the economy? How would we know?</i>	Exercise sheet distributed in class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ansolabehere and Stewart, “Amazing Race”: http://www.bostonreview.net/BR34.1/ansolabehere_stewart.php • Ambinder, “Race Over?” http://www.theatlantic.com/doc/200901/obama-race • Bialik, “Did Race Win the Election for Obama?” http://blogs.wsj.com/numbersguy/did-race-win-the-election-for-obama-487/ Sides, “Race, the Economy, and the 2008 Election” http://www.themonkeycage.org/2009/01/race_the_economy_and_the_2008.html 		
T	Oct	5	Conference Day: <i>Can spatial modeling help us settle historical controversies?</i>	Second problem set 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). 	Second memo (paper blurb) due Tuesday in class	
Th	Oct	7	MAKEUP: Spatial Models of Legislatures The Prisoner's Dilemma & Other Examples of Strategic Action		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shepsle and Bonchek, Ch. 5, 114-129 • Shepsle and Bonchek, 197-206 • Dixit and Skeath, <i>Games of Strategy</i>, 89–104 (2008 ed.); (83–98 2004). • Dixit and Nalebuff, <i>Thinking Strategically</i>. Chs. 1, 2 		Game Theory ↓
T	Oct	12	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 		
Th	Oct	14	Conference Day: <i>Can the prisoner's dilemma help us understand nuclear competition?</i>	Midterm essay distributed today	<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 [available on JSTOR] 	Second problem set due by noon on Friday.	
T	Oct	19	BREAK		•		

Th	Oct	21	BREAK				
T	Oct	26	Mancur Olson's "Logic of Collective Action"		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shepsle and Bonchek, Ch. 9. • Mancur Olson. <i>The Logic of Collective Action</i>. Ch. 1-2 • 		Collective Action Problems
Th	Oct	28	(Olson, continued)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Logic of Collective Action</i>. Chs. 5-6. 		
T	Nov	2	"The Logic of Political (non)Participation". <i>Is it really not rational to vote?</i>		<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.	Midterm essay due today!	Collective Action Problems, Commons Problems, potential solutions →
Th	Nov	4	The Tragedy of the Commons <i>Why are environmental problems so difficult to solve?</i>		<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. • Feeny, David et al. "The Tragedy of the Commons: Twenty-Two Years Later." <i>Human Ecology</i> 18:1(Mar 1990), 1-19. Available on JSTOR. • Krister P. Andersson et al. "The Politics of Decentralized Natural Resource Governance." <i>PS: Political Science and Politics</i>. 37:3 (July 2004): 421-426. Available on JSTOR. 	Third memo (paper blurb) due 5 pm on WED!	
T	Nov	9	New Institutionalism <i>How do we craft political institutions to deal with public goods and externalities?</i>	Third problem set handed out	Shepsle and Bonchek, Ch. 10-12, 14		
Th	Nov	11	The Puzzle of Participation: The Empirical Perspective <i>Who cares what rational choice theorists say: how many Americans <u>really</u> vote?</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rosenstone and Hansen, Chs. 1-2 		Political Participation: Individuals vs.

T	Nov	16	The Puzzle of Political Participation II <i>What role do institutions play?</i>	Fourth memo assignment distributed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rosenstone and Hansen, Chs. 3, 5, 6 		The Discipline of Political Science	
Th Fr	Nov	18/ 19	Computer Laboratory Sessions: Getting results out of SDA and into your paper	Worksheet distributed in class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guide to SDA: “More about cross tabulation tables,” “Comparing Means,” “Additional Options.” 			
T	Nov	23	Race and Political Participation <i>Do African Americans really participate at lower levels than white Americans?</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rosenstone and Hansen, Ch 7 Verba and Nie, Ch 10 Verba, Schlozman, and Brady, Ch 8 	Problem Set 3 Due!		
Th	Nov	25	Thanksgiving!					
T	Nov	30	Continuing Divisions within the Discipline <i>Why is political science such a diverse discipline?</i>		<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. 			
Th	Dec	2	What is Political Science? Reflections from Two Practitioners <i>Angst after a lifetime as an academic?</i>		<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.)			
T	Dec	7	Final day of class, discussion of final exam	Final exam study sheet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 	Fourth memo due!		