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**Office Hours:** M,W,F 10:50-11:30am and 1:55-2:45pm, and by appointment.

**Course Overview:**

Political and public choice economics can be defined as the analysis of decision-making in non-traditional market settings, specifically political market settings, using economic models. Essentially, the individual utility-maximizing agent that acts in economic markets also acts in the political arena. Therefore, any policy outcomes are the product of interactions among individuals in political markets. In this framework, it is apparent that governmental decisions are the result of rational optimizing behavior, even if they do not lead to policies that maximize national welfare. The public choice field can be roughly divided into two subfields, institutional political economy and social choice theory. The former takes a look at the role of institutions in government outcomes from a positive (in the economic sense) point of view. The latter examines how different voting procedures affect incentives and thus results in a normative (welfare-oriented) sense.

This is an upper-level undergraduate course that demands a lot of work (reading and writing), but that work should result in a good understanding of the topic and fulfillment from learning. The issues we

**Policy on Cheating:**

**If you are found to have violated the honor code (see below), by both the honor code council and myself, you will automatically fail the course!**

**Electronics in the Classroom**

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**responsibility to make sure that you have signed in for each class (having someone else sign your name is a violation of the honor code). Excused absences require documentation!! Just an email saying “I’m sick” is not sufficient!**

**In addition, you may be administratively dropped if you do not attend each (all) of the first 3 days of class.**

**Learning systems:**

1. Lecturing: explaining difficult material not easily learned on your own with text, groups, etc.
2. Exams: exams should be learning tools as well as assessment tools! We will go over each exam in depth in class. Reviewing exams is one area where in-class discussion and explanation are most effective. Just reading answers on a key has been shown to be one of the least effective methods to learn material. Therefore, exam reviews will be the one area of class where no notes, associated pictures, or keys will be posted.
3. Group-Led-Discussions: we will cover both classic and more recent relevant articles from scholarly journals. Group-led-discussions are a mix of presentations and discussions. The more creative you can be with these, the more you will get out of them (and the better will be your grade). Finding interesting ways to engage the class in discussion of these articles will teach you critical skills that will not only solidify the current information, but will also aid in your learning for other classes. Presentation of material is one of the most instructive learning systems because:
  - a. *If you are going to inform others about what you know, you must first fully understand it yourselves. If you cannot explain a concept to others you may not fully understand it yourself.*
  - b. *You must research the topic, which may expose you to new ideas and sources of material. These sources could help in other coursework.*
  - c. *Most “real-world” careers require some form of presentation skills.*
  - d. *You will start to learn how to defend specific points of view in front of others. This is a critical professional skill!*

*relearn the material as we build upon that information. This increases long-term learning!*

There will be three exams and a cumulative final. All exams are cumulative, and the material does build on itself so it is important to understand all of the concepts as we go.

2. Group-Led Discussion: to give incentives for giving high quality discussions and informing the class, these will be graded.
3. Quizzes on Article Readings: to motivate actually reading the articles. Since this is an upper-

have already been critiqued by PhD referees before being published. However, if you find follow-up articles that critique the paper it is fine (and even encouraged) to cite those articles. The groups leading the discussion will have studied their paper in great detail, but I expect the rest of the class to have read all of the papers and be ready to discuss them – rude and counter-productive behavior such as texting and having your laptop open during class discussion will *sev*

**Grading Scale:**

<u>Your score</u>	<u>Grade</u>
92% to 100%	A
90% to 91%	A-
88% to 89%	B+
82% to 87%	B
80% to 81%	B-
78% to 79%	C+
72% to 77%	C
70% to 71%	C-
68% to 69%	D+
62% to 67%	D
60% to 61%	D-

**Additional Notes:**

Accommodation for Disabilities

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### *Classroom Behavior*

Faculty and students should be aware of the campus [Classroom and Course-Related Behavior policy](#) which describes examples of unacceptable classroom behavior and provides information on how to handle such circumstances should they arise. Faculty are encouraged to address the issue of classroom behavior in the syllabus, and to understand their [professional rights and duties](#).

Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment.

Those who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with race, color, national origin, sex, pregnancy, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, veteran status, political affiliation or political philosophy. Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records. For more information, see the policies on [classroom behavior](#) and the [Student Code of Conduct](#)

