

POLS 4073
Social Choice and Institutions
Fall 2021

Instructor

Dr. Michael S. Lynch
Office: Baldwin Hall 416
Email: mlynch@uga.edu
Office Hours: Tuesdays
9:30 AM-11:00 AM and by appointment

Class Schedule

Tuesdays and Thursdays
2:20 PM – 3:35 PM
Baldwin Hall 102

Course Description This course is intended to provide students with an introduction to social choice theory and its application to political institutions. Students will learn the analytical tools of social choice theory and will use these tools to analyze and better understand American political institutions.

Readings

Readings for this course will consist of various articles and book chapters assigned that will either be available online or via eLC.

Course Grading

Your grade in this class will be assigned according to the following:

1. **Class attendance and participation** (10% of final grade): Students are expected to be familiar with assigned readings and should be prepared to intelligently discuss and debate issues from the readings during class. As such, class attendance and participation will be vital to your success in this class. To be awarded full participation points you must attend class, read any assigned materials, and actively engage the class in discussion.
2. **Short Assignments** (40% of final grade): A variety of short assignments will be due throughout the semester. These assignments are designed to encourage students to engage with the course readings and to develop analytical skills. They will consist of both short reactions to readings and short problem sets over technical portions of the readings.

Assignments turned in late will be penalized one letter grade for each day they are late. After one week, late assignments will no longer be accepted.

3. **Midterm Exam** (25% of final grade): Please take note of the date for the midterm exam and mark it on your calendar now.
4. **Final Exam** (25% of final grade): Please take note of the date for the final exam and mark it on your calendar now.

Missed exams will only be excused for a documented illness (documentation must be provided by a physician) or a death in the family. If you are excused from an exam, I reserve the right to alter the format and substance of the makeup exam (e.g. you may not get the same exam as everyone else).

Course grades will be assigned as follows: 93–100% = A, 90–93% = A-, 87–90% = B+, 83–87% = B, 80–83% = B-, 77–80% = C+, 73–77% = C, 70–73% = C-, 60–70% = D, 0–60% = F.

Other Issues

1. **Disabilities:** Students with disabilities of any kind are strongly encouraged to tell me at the beginning of the semester, so appropriate accommodations can be made. Students with disabilities that have been certified by the UGA Disabilities Services Office will be accommodated according to university policy. Contact Disabilities Services for more information.
2. **Instructor Availability:** I am available to meet with students by appointment if anyone cannot attend my posted office hours. Please email me to schedule a meeting.
3. **Technology in the Classroom:** Technology, used correctly, has the potential to greatly improve the quality of our lives. Technology, used incorrectly, has the potential of making the instructor very angry. Please make sure technology is used for facilitate learning, and not distraction.
4. **Cheating and Plagiarism:** All course work must meet the standards put forth in the University of Georgia's Student Honor Code. See the Academic Honesty Policy for details on what is expected of you (<https://ovpi.uga.edu/sites/default/files/uga-academc-honesty-policy-may-07.pdf>).

Tentative Schedule

Why Institutions?

August 19 & 24

Introduction

Bianco, William T. 2001. "Deciding How To Decide." In *American Politics: Strategy and Choice*.

August 26 & 31

Collective Action and Institutions

Hardin, Garrett. 1968. "The Tragedy of the Commons." *Science*. 162: 1243-1248.

Axelrod, Robert M. 1984. *The Evolution of Cooperation*, Chapters 1 and 4.

(recommended) Ostrom, Elinor. 1997. "A Behavioral Approach to the Rational Choice Theory of Collective Action." *American Political Science Review*. 92: 1-22.

September 2 & 7

Why Government?

Olson, Mancur. 1993. "Dictatorship, Democracy, and Development." *American Political Science Review*. 92: 1-22.

Daniels, Brigham and Blake Hudson. 2015. "Our Constitutional Commons." *Georgia Law Review* 49: 997-1065.

(recommended) Acheson, James M. 1988. *The Lobster Gangs of Maine*. Selected chapters.

Institutional Analysis

September 9 & 14

Norms, Rules, and Institutions

Shepsle, Kenneth A. 2010. "The Rules of the Game: What Rules? Which Game?"

U.S. Constitution

Taylor, Steven L., Matthew Shugart, Arend Lijphart, and Bernard Grofman. 2014. "Constitutions." *A Different Democracy: American Government in a 31-Country Perspective*.

September 16, 21 & 23

Preferences and Spatial Voting

Strom, Gerald S. 1990. *The Logic of Lawmaking: A Spatial Theory Approach*. Selected chapters.

Dougherty, Keith L. and Jac C. Heckelman. 2006. "A Pivotal Voter from a Pivotal State: Roger Sherman at the Constitutional Convention." *American Political Science Review* 100(2): 297-302.

September 28 & 30

Multidimensional Voting

Strom, Gerald S. 1990. *The Logic of Lawmaking: A Spatial Theory Approach*. Selected chapters.

Fiorina, Morris P. and Charles R. Plott. 1978. "Committee Decisions Under Majority Rule:

An Experimental Study.” *American Political Science Review*. 72(2): 575-598.

(recommended) Bianco, William T., Michael S. Lynch, Gary J. Miller, and Itai Sened. 2006. ““A Theory Waiting to Be Discovered and Used”: A Reanalysis of Canonical Experiments on Majority-Rule Decision Making.” *Journal of Politics*. 68(4): 838-851.

October 5 & 7

Applied Example and Review

Strom, Gerald S. 1990. *The Logic of Lawmaking: A Spatial Theory Approach*. Selected chapters.

Voteview.com

Poole, Keith and Howard Rosenthal. *Congress: A Political-Economic History of Roll Call Voting*. Chapters 1 and 2.

October 12

Midterm Exam

Congress

October 14

Committees

Lynch, Michael S., Anthony J. Madonna and Allison S. Vick. 2020. “The Erosion of “Regular Order” in the U.S. House: A Historical Examination of Special Rules.”

Black, Duncan. 1958. *Theory of Committees and Elections*. Selected chapters.

October 19 & 21

Filibusters

Wawro, Gregory J. and Eric Schickler. 2004. “Where’s the Pivot?” *American Journal of Political Science*. 48: 758-774.

Madonna, Anthony J. 2011. “Winning Coalition Formation in the U.S. Senate.” *American Journal of Political Science*. 55: 276-288.

?Winning Coalition Formation in the House and Senate: Examining the Effect of Institutional Change on Major Legislation.? 2011. *Journal of Politics*. 73:1225-1238. With Jamie L. Carson and Anthony J. Madonna.

October 26 & 28

Strategic Voting

Denzau, Arthur T., William H. Riker, Kenneth A. Shepsle. 1985. “Farquharson and Fenno: Sophisticated Voting and Home Style.” *American Political Science Review*. 79: 117-134.

Groseclose, Tim and Jeffery Milyo. “Sincere Versus Sophisticated Voting in Congress: Theory and Evidence.” *Journal of Politics*. 72(1): 1-14.

President

November 2 & 4

Presidential Power

Moe, Terry M, and William G. Howell. 1999. "Unilateral Action and Presidential Power: A theory." *Presidential Studies Quarterly*. 29: 850-873.

Courts

November 9

Agenda Control and Opinions

Bonneau, Chris W., Thomas H. Hammond, Forrest Maltzman, and Paul J. Wahlbeck. 2007. "Agenda Control, the Median Justice, and the Majority Opinion on the U.S. Supreme Court." *American Journal of Political Science*. 51: 890-905

November 11 & 16

Appointments

Moraski, Byron J., and Charles R. Shipan. 1999. "The Politics of Supreme Court Nominations: A Theory of Institutional Constraints and Choices." *American Journal of Political Science*. 43: 1069-1095.

Separation of Powers

November 18 & 23

Pivotal Politics

Krehbiel, Keith. 1998. *Pivotal Politics: A Theory of U.S. Lawmaking*. Selected chapters.

November 25

No Class-Thanksgiving

Reforming Institutions

November 30 & December 2

TBA

Readings TBA

December 7

Catch and Review

December 9

Final Exam 12 PM-3 PM