

POLS 4541 – The Politics of Collective Action: Theory and Strategy

Class Time: MWF 10:20am – 11:10am

Classroom: Baldwin 264

Instructor: Jeffrey M. Glas, PhD

Contact Information:

Office Hours: By Appointment

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I. Course Description

Collective action is the central subject of political science. The questions of political science, of politics, concern the who, what, when, where, why, and how of collective action. The collective under consideration varies within and across subfields of political science. A national polity is a collective. As are local polities, legislative bodies, bureaucracies, courts, political parties, interest groups, trade associations, neighborhoods, even corporations. Within each of these collectives lies the potential for political conflict.

This course offers students an interdisciplinary perspective to questions about how and why individuals come together to solve the social/economic/political problems faced by their communities understanding why these efforts either succeed or fail, and strategies for overcoming collective action problems. Upon successful completion of this course, you should:

- (1.1) Learn to think in a more nuanced and scientific way about politics and government.
- (1.2) Understand the fundamental collective action problems faced by political groups.
- (1.3) Articulate common strategies groups employ to manage or overcome the collective action problems they face.
- (1.4) Explain the conditions under which individuals are more or less likely to cooperate in social dilemmas.
- (1.5) Apply these lessons groups commonly found in political, economic, and social spheres.

II. Course Requirements and Graded Evaluation

(2.1) Required Text

As a “no-cost” class you are not required to purchase a textbook or any other reading material for this class. That said, we do have a robust reading list for the semester. Beginning on page four of this syllabus you will find a detailed reading and assignment schedule for the course.

(2.2) Course Assignments

Learning is an active exercise. Students at all levels of learning and accomplishment benefit when they are actively engaged with course material. Your grade in this class will be assessed through a series of five writing assignments, each building upon the last. In the first of these, you will identify and explain the details of a collective action problem of your choosing. In your second paper, you will identify and outline public policies that sought to address the problem you have chosen. The third writing assignment involves identifying groups with a common interest in resolving your collective action problem followed by a fourth paper that involves detailing strategies for pooling these groups together and advocating for policy reform. Your final paper will stitch together the preceding four and finish with a discussion of the challenges your strategy will likely face in the American political environment.

Here are some important dates for these assignments and the rubric I will follow for your final grade:

Item	Weight	Date
Issue Interest Paper	10%	January 26 th
Policy/Literature Review	20%	February 16 th
Clientele Group Paper	20%	March 15 th
Group Strategy Paper	20%	April 5 th
Final Paper	20%	April 29 th
Attendance	10%	Daily

(2.4) Grading

All grades (including final grades) will be assigned following the system depicted below:

A	=	94-100	C+	=	78
A-	=	90	C	=	74
B+	=	88	C-	=	70
B	=	84	D	=	60 – 69
B-	=	80	F	≤	59

III. Class Policies

(3.1) Disability Disclosure Statement

Able-bodiedness should not impede your intellectual development. Please get in touch with me (Dr. Glas) about any accommodations you need in the classroom and for exams. We have some amazing resources for you here at UGA. For testing accommodations please contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) as soon as possible. For more information please check out the DRC's website (www.uga.drc.edu). The DRC is located at 825 Lumpkin Street (Clark-Howell Hall) and can be contacted by phone at 706.542.8719.

(3.2) Student Athletes

Representing our university in athletics places some unusual scheduling obligations on you. Please get in touch with me (Dr. Glas) about your schedule so we can make sure you are able to achieve in the classroom as well as on the field or in the arena.

(3.3) Absences

John Lennon once said, “Life happens while you’re busy making other plans.” Attending class is critical for your success in this class. Participation is a significant portion of your grade and there is a significant amount of course content that we will cover in our class meetings and breakout sessions. Absences will be excused for legitimate reasons (and I am reasonable).

Please do not come to class if you are ill. The UGA Health Center (www.uhs.uga.edu) is located at 55 Carlton Street (across the street from Ramsey).

(3.4) Missed/Late Assignments

Missed assignments are awarded a grade of zero. Late assignments will be accepted with a penalty of ten (10) points for each calendar day late.

(3.5) Cheating and Academic Misconduct

Violations of the academic dishonesty rules are grounds for receiving an “F” in the course as well as possible expulsion from the university. If you have any questions about what constitutes cheating, academic misconduct, or plagiarism, please examine the university policy and /or ask the instructor.

(3.6) Problems and Emergencies

If a problem or emergency arises that prevents you from attending an exam or coming to class, you should contact me (Dr. Glas) as soon as possible.

(3.7) Policy on Disruptive Behavior

- 1) Turn communication devices to silent...or turn them off entirely.
- 2) Be polite during class discussion.

(3.8) Withdraw Policy

Be advised that the last day to withdraw from a course without failing is Thursday, March 21st. All students who withdraw after this date will receive a “WF”.

IV. Course Schedule

Unit I: Why Collective Action?

Week 1 – January 8th, 10th, and 12th – Perspectives on Government and Politics

Syllabus & Introductions

Friday, January 12th – SPSA – No Class

Friday, January 12th – Last Day of Drop/Add

Week 2 – January 17th and 19th – The State of Nature?

Selection from Hobbes, Leviathan Chapter 13

Selection from Locke, Second Treatise of Government Chapter 2

Selection from Montesquieu, The Spirit of the Law Chapters 1 & 2

Selection from Rousseau, A Discourse on Inequality Intro and First Part

Selection from Hume, A Treatise of Human Nature Book III Sec 1, Section 2.1 & 2.2

Selection from Engels, The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State Part I

Selection from Rawls, A Theory of Justice Chapter 1, Section 4

Selection from Nozick, Anarchy, State, and Utopia Chapters 1 & 2

Monday, January 15th – MLK Day – No Classes

Week 3 – January 22nd, 24th, and 26th – Political Animals

Selection from Aristotle, Politics

Selection from Wrangham and Peterson, Demonic Males: Apes and the Origins of Human Violence Chapter 1

Selection from de Waal, Chimpanzee Politics Chapter 2

Callaway, E., 2017. Oldest Homo sapiens fossil claim rewrites our species' history. *Nature*, 546, pp.289-293.

Interest Issue Paper Due

Week 4 – January 29th and 31st – Oh, the Humanity?!

Latham, E., 1952. The group basis of politics: Notes for a theory. *American Political Science Review*, 46(2), pp.376-397.

Bowles and Gintis (2011), "A Cooperative Species."

Friday, February 2nd – No Class

Week 5 – February 5th, 7th, and 9th – Collective Action and Public Goods

Hardin, G., 1968. The tragedy of the commons: the population problem has no technical solution; it requires a fundamental extension in morality. *science*, 162(3859), pp.1243-1248.

Colomer, J. 2011. “The Public Good” (see eLC)

Heath, J., 2006. The benefits of cooperation. *Philosophy & Public Affairs*, 34(4), pp.313-351.

Week 6 – February 12th, 14th, and 16th The Logic of Collective Action

Olson (1965), “A Theory of Groups and Organization” (see eLC)

“Group Size and Group Behavior” (see eLC)

Policy/Literature Review Paper Due

Unit II: Who Cooperates?

Week 7 – February 19th, 21st, and 23rd – Group Bias

Whitt, S. and Wilson, R.K., 2007. The dictator game, fairness and ethnicity in postwar Bosnia. *American Journal of Political Science*, 51(3), pp.655-668.

Habyarimana, J., Humphreys, M., Posner, D.N. and Weinstein, J.M., 2007. Why does ethnic diversity undermine public goods provision?. *American Political Science Review*, 101(4), pp.709-725.

Gavrilets, S., 2015. Collective action problem in heterogeneous groups. *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences*, 370(1683), p.20150016.

Week 8 – February 26th, 28th, and March 1st – Trust and Reciprocity

Wilson, R.K. and Eckel, C.C., 2011. Trust and social exchange. *Cambridge handbook of experimental political science*, pp.243-57.

Gintis, H., 2013. Altruistic reciprocity. *Handbook on the Economics of Reciprocity and Social Enterprise*, Edward Elgar, Cheltenham, pp.20-43.

Carlin, R.E. and Love, G.J., 2013. The politics of interpersonal trust and reciprocity: An experimental approach. *Political Behavior*, 35(1), pp.43-63.

Schweitzer, M.E., Hershey, J.C. and Bradlow, E.T., 2006. Promises and lies: Restoring violated trust. *Organizational behavior and human decision processes*, 101(1), pp.1-19.

Week 9 – Spring Break

Monday, March 4th – Friday, March 8th – Spring Break – No Classes

Week 10 – March 11th, 13th, and 15th – Prosociality & Altruism

Bowles and Gintis (2011), “The Evolution of Altruism in Humans.”

Bolsen, T., Ferraro, P.J. and Miranda, J.J., 2014. Are voters more likely to contribute to other public goods? Evidence from a large-scale randomized policy experiment. *American Journal of Political Science*, 58(1), pp.17-30.

Clientele Group Paper Due

Week 11 – March 18th, 20th, and 22nd – Social Capital

Putnam, R.D., 1994. Social capital and public affairs. *Bulletin of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences*, pp.5-19.

Richey, S., 2007. Manufacturing trust: Community currencies and the creation of social capital. *Political Behavior*, 29(1), pp.69-88.

Thursday, March 21st – Withdrawal Deadline

Unit III: The Politics of Collective Action

Week 12 – March 25th, 27th, and 29th – The Environment

Ostrom (1990), “Analyzing Long Enduring, Self-Organized, and Self-Governed CPRs”

Ostrom, E., 2010. A multi-scale approach to coping with climate change and other collective action problems. *Solutions*, 1(2), pp.27-36.

Lubell, M., Vedlitz, A., Zahran, S. and Alston, L.T., 2006. Collective action, environmental activism, and air quality policy. *Political Research Quarterly*, 59(1), pp.149-160.

Adger, W.N., 2010. Social capital, collective action, and adaptation to climate change. *Der klimawandel*, pp.327-345.

Week 13 – April 1st and 3rd – Labor Unions

Olson (1965). “The Labor Union and Economic Freedom.”

Chava, S., Danis, A. and Hsu, A., 2020. The economic impact of right-to-work laws: Evidence from collective bargaining agreements and corporate policies. *Journal of Financial Economics*, 137(2), pp.451-469.

Group Strategy Paper Due

Friday, January 12th – MPSA – No Class

Week 14 – April 8th, 10th, and 12th – Voter Turnout

Riker, W.H. and Ordeshook, P.C., 1968. A Theory of the Calculus of Voting. *American political science review*, 62(1), pp.25-42.

Morton, R.B. and Ou, K., 2019. Public voting and prosocial behavior. *Journal of Experimental Political Science*, 6(3), pp.141-158.

Week 15 – April 15th, 17th, and 19th – Political Parties

Selection from Cox and McCubbins (2005) (see eLC)

Koger, G., Masket, S. and Noel, H., 2010. Cooperative party factions in American politics. *American Politics Research*, 38(1), pp.33-53.

Clarke, A.J., 2020. Party Sub-Brands and American Party Factions. *American Journal of Political Science*, 64(3), pp.452-470.

Week 16 – April 22nd, 24th, and 26th – So...Where Are We?

Gilens, M. and Page, B.I., 2014. Testing theories of American politics: Elites, interest groups, and average citizens. *Perspectives on politics*, 12(3), pp.564-581.

McFarland, A.S., 2018. Interest groups and the policymaking process: Sources of countervailing power in America. In *The politics of interests* (pp. 58-79). Routledge. (see eLC)

Week 17 – April 29th

Tuesday, April 30th – Reading Day