Spring 2017
POLS 35801
Formal Theory and Comparative Politics

Monika Nalepa
mnalepa@uchicago.edu
The University of Chicago
Thursday: 12-2:50 p.m.
Pick 324 A

Office hours: Thursday 3:30 - 5 p.m.

Course description

In this course we will discuss political science articles in Comparative Politics that employ formal modeling. The articles have been chosen in way that matches the interests of participants in the class, but they also constitute an excellent overview of the literature in Comparative Politics of recent years. Because of its topical breadth, this course may therefore be also taken as a field survey in comparative politics. There are two prerequisites: Game Theory I (offered in the Autumn) and Game Theory II (offered in the Winter). The prerequisites may be waived with the consent of the instructor.

Required and Recommended Material

The readings for this class are political science articles that have been uploaded to the chalk website. All students are expected to do the readings before the day they will be discussed. Please purchase Scott Gehlbach’s Domestic Models of Formal Politics (Cambridge University Press) and Milan Svolik’s The Politics of Authoritarian Rule (Cambridge University Press).

Presentations

Following April 20th, in the second part of each class, one of the students will be tasked with the challenge of presenting to their classmates the model they are working on. The presentation should take roughly 30 -45 minutes, although because of interruptions (as students struggle to grasp the model and ask presenters clarifying questions) the presentation may slightly go over the time allotted. To prepare the presentation, you should use Beamer. Keynote, Powerpoint or any software will not be easy to work with given the mathematical notation you are likely to use.
Final Paper

Throughout the quarter, you are encouraged to continue working on the project you that motivated your taking this class. My expectation is that you will develop a formal model that will be the “workhorse” of your revised paper and that it will respond to the comments received in class. You are encouraged to consult with me as you conduct those revisions during office hours. It is important that you realize that I expect you to improve on the model you presented in class. This final paper is due June 8th.

Prerequisites

The mathematical prerequisites for this course are rather steep. I expect you to be proficient in the material covered in Game Theory I and Game Theory II, at the level it is taught in the Political Science Department at the University of Chicago.

Problem Sets

Just as in the introductory game theory class, you may work on your problem sets in groups (of 2 or 3). You may submit just one version of the problem set per group, if you wish.

Grading

Grades will be assigned according to the following rubric:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>91-100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>81-90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>71-80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>51-70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>&lt; 50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“+” and“-” grades will be given out by the instructor’s discretion.

The requirement for this class will contribute to your final grade as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Problem Sets</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Paper</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Problem Sets

There will be three problem sets (due April 13, May 4, and May 25). You will have 7 days to complete the exam.

Calendar

March 30: Introduction and Professor Nalepa’s presentation

April 6: Formal Modeling and Qualitative Case Studies Please note, the normal meeting time for this class is canceled due to the MPSA. Instead, please attend the Saturday 9:45 am Panel Formal Modeling and Qualitative Case Studies at the Palmer House Hilton in Downtown Chicago.

Readings:

Sections 1.2 and 1.3 from Patty, John and Maggie Penn “Social Choice and Legitimacy.” 2013. The University of Chicago Press.

Sections 1.3 and 1.4 from Sean Gailmard and John Patty “Learning while Governing”

Bates, Bob “From Case Studies to Social Science: A Strategy for Political Research


Lorentzen, Peter, M Taylor Fravel and Jack Paine “Qualitative investigation of theoretical models: the value of process tracing” Journal of Theoretical Politics


April 13: Jennifer Gandhi’s (guest) presentation

Readings:

Gandhi, J, John Ora-Reuter and “Expanding the Pie: Compensating Losers in Authoritarian Regimes”


April 20: Genevieve Bates Presentation

Chapter 3 FMDP


April 27: Alexandra Chinchilla’s presentation Readings:

Chapter 3 FMDP

“Do audience costs exist?” a Symposium in Security Studies volume 21, issue 3

**May 4: Ji Xue’s presentation**
Readings:

Svolik, Milan Chapter 3 (“And then there was one!”) in “The Politics of Authoritarian Rule” 2012. Cambridge University Press.


**May 11: Eddie Yang’s presentation**
Readings:


Tyson, Scott “The Agency Problem Underlying the Use of Repression”

**May 18: Cathryn Grothe’s presentation**
Readings:


**May 19: Milan Svolik presents in TAM @3pm**

**May 25: Jing Zhang’s presentation**
Readings:

Chapter 2 FMDP


**June 1: Ipek Cinar’s and Zhenya Olimpieva’s presentation**
Readings:


Anne Meng “When Do Autocrats Share Power? A Theory of Party Institutionalization and Leader’

Chapter 8 from FMDP

Other recommended readings
Bureaucracy, delegation, expertise, oversight


2. Gailmard, Sean and John W. Patty. 2007. “Slackers and Zealots: Civil Service, Policy Discretion and Bureaucratic expertise”, AJPS 51(4) 873-889


Principal-agent models


**Fair Division**


**Legislative-Executive relations**


**Signalling games**
