Course Description

This course is concerned with the political economy of elections. It will analyze key topics in political science using both theoretical and empirical tools. Specific topics covered include: party and candidate strategy, electoral campaigns, the role of media and special interest groups, electoral accountability, and voter behavior.

Prerequisites

The course has no prerequisites, and it requires no knowledge of mathematics beyond arithmetic. However, this is a research methods course, therefore students should expect somewhat technical material.

Course Structure

The course consists of three weekly 50-minutes lectures. During lectures, we will discuss the core concepts, theories, and empirical results on a given topic. We will also sometimes solve problem sets, in order to consolidate our understanding of specific theories as well as practice for the exam. Students are encouraged to submit their answer to the problem sets (bringing a copy to class) so that they can receive feedback.

The reading list is for students who want to explore some topics in depth. While reading is very much encouraged, students are not expected to read articles before the lecture as lectures will be all-inclusive. For students who wish to consult a game theory handbook, a suggested title is:

- An introduction to Game Theory, by Martin Osborne
Assessment

Grades will be a function of two elements:

- Midterm during week 7
- Final exam during finals week

For students who perform better on the midterm than the final the weighting will be: Midterm 50%, Final 50%.

For students who perform better on the final than the midterm the weighting will be: Midterm 10%, Final 90%.

Course Policies

*Code of Conduct.* I would like this course to be an enjoyable learning experience for us all. To this end, I have two requests:

1. Please arrive on time and don’t leave early. Late arrivals and early departures make noise and distract. Please plan accordingly.

2. Please turn cell phones to silent and put them away. They are a temptation to you and a distraction to others.

*Academic Integrity.* Students in this course are expected to comply with UCSDs Policy on Integrity of Scholarship. In particular, plagiarism is considered a dishonest practice and a serious academic offense. Hence, there will be a zero tolerance policy with respect to these practices: any student violating the obligation of academic integrity during the term will automatically fail the class. For more resources and information on academic integrity, see https://students.ucsd.edu/academics/academic-integrity/index.html

*Disabilities.* Students with University-documented learning disabilities should inform their teaching assistant as soon as possible of their needs. Further, students requesting accommodations for this course due to a disability must provide a current Authorization for Accommodation (AFA) letter issued by the Office for Students with Disabilities (https://osd.ucsd.edu/). Students are required
to discuss accommodation arrangements with instructors and OSD liaisons in the department well in advance of any exams or assignments. The OSD Liaison for the Department of Political Science is Joanna Peralta; please connect with her via in-person advising (SSB 301) or the Virtual Advising Center as soon as possible.

Course Schedule and Suggested Readings (not required)

General introduction

Ashworth, Scott, Christopher Berry, and Ethan Bueno de Mesquita. 2015. “All Else Equal in Theory and Data (Big or Small).” PS: Political Science & Politics 48(1): 89-94.

Week 1: Are voters rational?


**Weeks 2 and 3: Elections: Prospective? Retrospective? (Introduction to static and sequential games)**


**Week 4: Games with imperfect information**

**Week 5: More on political agency**


**Week 6: Populism**

Margalit, Yotam. 2019. “Economic insecurity and the causes of populism reconsiderd.” Unpublished manuscript. Available at [https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/4c9bfa_f2afa141c0344c1fb2b50c1d461abb0d.pdf](https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/4c9bfa_f2afa141c0344c1fb2b50c1d461abb0d.pdf).
Week 7: Midterm

Week 8: Media


Week 9: Special Interest Groups


Week 10: Revision and Exam prep.